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Lei Feng serves again



Lei Feng, once the mainland's icon – the greatest servant of the people – has today been appropriated as a fashion icon and stripped of the strong morals he represented five decades ago.

Tianjin-based artist Dai Xiang revives the hero in 12 modern scenes, in an exhibition guaranteed to inspire viewers to rethink their modern values and what Lei's example can mean today.

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journeys from
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City residents, businesses found wasting extreme amounts of water

By Li Zhixian

Beijingers flush a Kunming Lake of water down their toilets four times per year by flushing with tap rather than recycled water, according to recent research.

Two investigations into municipal water consumption released in advance of World Water Day this Monday found water waste in the capital is epidemic.

Of 100 residential compounds equipped with a water-reclaiming system, only 18 were actually using it. Residential compounds built before 2001 do not have a system for reclaiming waste water.

About 80 million to 100 million tons of tap water are flushed each year, according to the investigation.

"As far as I know, 90 percent of residents are not using recycled water," said Peng Gong, an engineer at Beijing Heshengbeifang Development Company. "Many residents even bring in plumbers to disconnect from the system and hook their toilets into a tap feed."

"I usually use the sink to collect tap water and flush the toilet with it because the recycled water smells bad and runs black – it stains my toilet bowl," said An Li, a resident who lives in Dangdai Chenshi-

jiayuan, built in 2003.

Property management companies in many compounds blamed the problems on the municipal-supply system, which serves only 200 residential compounds in the city. Some compounds have their own water-recycling equipment, but the costs of operating it are very high.

"The water we collect is never enough to meet residential needs, so we end up having to switch over to tap water whenever we run out," Zhang Bin, manager of a property company, said. In summer, when water consumption peaks, his building supplements its waste water reservoir with 700 to 800 tons of tap water.

Yu Yaping, spokesman for Beijing Water Authority (BWA), said factories, farms and municipal green work consume the most reclaimed water, which leaves little for residents. "Over 650 million tons of reclaimed water were used last year, but that still wasn't enough for those organizations," Yu said.

The usage of water in the bath industry is equally absurd: bath centers in Beijing consume 81 million tons of water per year – 41 times the volume of Kunming Lake, according to the "2010 China Environmental Green

Paper" published last Friday by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Friends of Nature, an environmental NGO.

The Green Paper pointed out that the per capita water consumption in Beijing is 248 cubic meters, less than one-eighth of the national level and 5 percent of the world level.

The City Management Enforcement Bureau and BWA are planning to investigate sites with a high demand for water, including hotels, restaurants, public baths and construction sites. Those with no water-saving facilities may be fined up to 100,000 yuan.

The city is considering metered water prices, based on the amount of water used, for household consumers. The scheme is being discussed and a pilot project will begin before June.

As for recycled water usage, Yu said the authorities considered increasing its price last year but decided to keep it low in order to encourage more people to use it.

He said authorities will speed up the construction of more recycled water facilities, and will allocate 60 percent of the recycled water for urban landscaping, lakes and rivers and residential areas this year.

Aging population gives colleges new pressure

By Liang Meilan

Some universities are facing bankruptcy or closure due to a sharp drop in enrollment numbers from the 18- to 22-year-old age group.

The enrollment crash may be another side effect of China's steadily aging population, the principal of Wuhan University and the economist Gu Hailiang said in a *China Youth Daily* report Wednesday.

Since the government began its one-child policy in the 1980s, the population has been aging rapidly.

"Statistics show the number of college-age students will drop by 40 million during the next 10 years. The drop in students will intensify competition among universities. Those without competitive courses or burdened by bad management won't survive," Gu said.

According to official statistics published by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, the number of students taking the college entrance exams in Beijing this year fell 20 percent for the fourth time in a row and many provinces face the same problem.

Gu said private universities whose incomes rely on tuition can keep running with 11,000 students; if the student body falls below 6,000 the school will run a deficit; if it dips lower than 5,000 the school will go bankrupt.

To weather the recruitment shortage, many schools have resorted to preferential admissions and offering scholarships. A teacher at Beijing Hanlin Vocational College said that around recruitment season each year, many less competitive colleges send their representatives to other towns to headhunt prospective students. "We do our utmost to persuade students to attend even when their scores are far below average," she said.

But educational quality is



Less prestigious schools are head-hunting underachievers to pad their admissions. CFP Photo

being neglected.

Gu said less competitive schools should consolidate their strengths and avoid blind expansion. He also praised the practice at some more prestigious private schools – like Beijing Geely University – that only bring in enough students to meet a realistic market demand.

"Chinese private education is far from being mature – there are not enough investors in education," Gu says, pointing to misconceptions about private schools' "non-profit" status. Investors do not draw dividends, but the school still has to turn a profit to stay open.

Deng Wei, a commentator with *The Beijing News*, said the bankruptcy problems may also creep up on public universities, which often have huge loans to pay off.

"Experts said some universities are already bankrupt according to strict audits," Deng said. "The enrollment expansion has also crippled education quality, which damages the reputations of these schools and makes it difficult for their students to find work."

Expect more sandstorms to come in next months

By Han Manman

Six to nine more sandstorms are expected to hit north China during the next two months as a result of cold spells this spring, according to data from the national meteorological department.

The prediction came after sandstorms whipped cities as far as Hong Kong and Taiwan with sand the past two weeks.

An upcoming cold spell in April, together with dry weather in northwestern China, may trigger successive sandstorms but numbers are still at the average level, said meteorological authorities in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the point of origin for many sandstorms.

Meteorologists said – in contrast to widespread opinion – that number of yellow and dusty days have decreased since the 1980s.

Five sandstorms in March fits the average: National Climate Center (NCC) has recorded four to five sandstorms annually in March since 2000, Zhang Peiqun, director of the center's climate service department said.

"Cold weather froze the dust to the ground. As the temperature rose in mid-March, the soil thawed. Any day with gales could easily whip up floating dust to start a sandstorm," he said.

The largest sandstorm in the past seven years hit on March 19, shrouding the north in four days of

gritty, dusty clouds with poor visibility. Many people had to wear masks when going out.

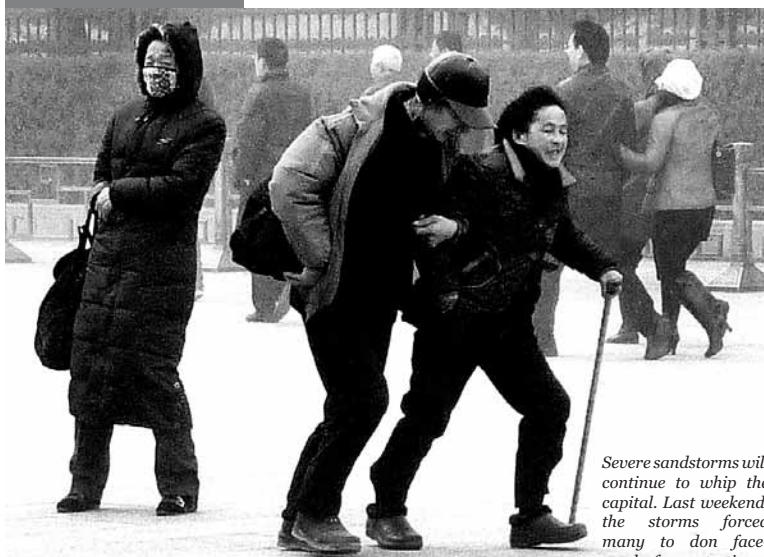
Twenty-three cities, including Beijing, experienced severe air pollution on March 21. The US Embassy in Beijing warned that particles in the air made conditions "hazardous" and the air quality was rated "very unhealthy."

The central government is attempting to resurrect the decimated grasslands of Inner Mongolia as part of a plan that would use plant roots to hold the sands in place. It has invested 6.5 billion yuan to preserve the existing grasslands, and there has actually been a big improvement, Zhang Xiaoye, deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences, said.

The country has 1.6 million square kilometers of desert. About 80,000 square kilometers of grassland turned into desert during the past few decades; however, solid forestation and tarps to hold down sand may help curb storms.

"Essentially, the storms can't be stopped," he said. "It's wrong to think that if a city has good enough forestation and conservation then the sandstorms will vanish forever," Zhang said.

"As long as there is sand, there will always be sandstorms," Guo Hu, director of Beijing's meteorological bureau, said.



Severe sandstorms will continue to whip the capital. Last weekend, the storms forced many to don face-masks for protection. CFP Photo

Swinging professor shocked to find wife swapping still a crime

By Zhao Hongyi

An assistant professor was accused of holding swinger parties with his friends where they swapped spouses as sex partners this week.

Surprisingly, the case has been strongly defended by both scholars and netizens.

Wang Honggao is an assistant professor at a university in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. The 1957-born Wang had two past unsuccessful marriages.

Wang found many swinger-clubs online where he learned about spouse swapping for sexual entertainment. He reportedly contacted some of the clubs to start his own branch in Nanjing.

In the two years between summer 2007 and fall 2009, Wang held 18 swinger parties, and attended another 17, where participants swapped spouses for sex. He married Wu Yue, one of the participants.

Twenty-two participants stood before the Qinghuai District Court of Nanjing this week charged with "assembly for immoral sexual purposes."

"I was surprised to hear that was what they were charging us with," Li Yinhe, a women's activist said in a blog entry dated March 23.

Li said the swinger parties were voluntary and did not harm any participants.

"This sexual lifestyle has broad appeal to some niche groups," she said, adding sexual encounters are the business of the people engaging in them.

Li has been active in defending women's rights and popularizing casual sex in China. At the annual national congress meetings earlier this month, she lobbied for congressional members to decriminalize "assembly for immoral sexual purposes."

"Li is leading people to crime," a netizen said. "How many families will break and how many crimes will occur if we nullify that charge?"

"The criminal law of China indicates that 'assembly for

immoral sexual purposes' spits in the face of social order and morality," Liu Weimin, a lawyer at the Shenzhen-based Faquan Marriage Lawyer Office, said.

"It is clearly defined as a crime in the law and can be punishable with up to five years in prison, jail or community custody," he said.

"Spouse swapping also violates the part of the marriage contract that requires couples 'to be faithful to each other,'" Liu said.

"Legal systems in most Asian countries are responsible for legislating common morals," Li Hong, deputy president of the School of Law, Tsinghua University, said.

In South Korea, the law pro-

hibits any club that "encourages the exchanges of spouses for sex."

"It's like the prohibition on sexual abuse of a minor in the West," Li said.

In the practice of legal investigation and filing in China, Li said one unwritten rule is very clear: "the government won't investigate until someone brings charges."

"This leaves great room for people to do anything," Li explained, "as long as you do not cause problems for others."

Both the lawyer and the deputy president said related laws will probably go unchanged for the next two to three decades.

WWF seeks more to pledge 'lights out' for Earth Hour

By Zhang Dongya

This Saturday night will be the second Earth Hour in China. More organizations, enterprises and shopping centers, including the Imperial Palace, will join the campaign Saturday night.

As of Monday, 2,000 cities from 115 countries and regions have pledged to turn off their lights at 8:30 pm local time March 27.

In China, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has persuaded 26 cities to participate. Twenty cities participated in last year's Earth Hour in China. Chengdu is the new participant.

Over 100 enterprises including ChinaHR, China Pacific Insurance Group and SINA House have signed up.

In Beijing, landmark buildings like the Beijing Yintai Center, Beijing New World Center and

China World Trade Center will switch off their lights for an hour. The Imperial Palace and National Center for the Performing Arts will also participate.

22 International Art Plaza, the new home of many international galleries and culture organizations, will also switch off its exterior lighting during Earth Hour.

WWF also started promoting a "Low-Carbon Lifestyle Week" in China this week to call for energy saving and environmental protection in daily life. From Monday to Friday, they are calling on people to adopt five simple low-carbon actions to save energy and resources.

The actions are aimed to save water, save electricity and cut carbon use at home and work and when commuting or shopping.

"The low-carbon lifestyle is trendy and you can see it every-

where It is a good concept," Li Lihe, a member of Low-Carbon Group on bj.soufun.com, said.

"Their actions are specific and practical, such as saving one liter of water at home and saving 10 pieces of paper at the office. I have started to store used water and take cloth bags when shopping in the supermarket," she said.

This year, the WWF is collecting new ideas for saving energy and pictures of landmarks with their lights off. Submissions may be rewarded.

Earth Hour, organized by the WWF, began in Sydney, Australia in 2007, and came to China last year. The Bird's Nest and Water Cube joined in the event in 2009.

Some 4,000 cities around the world participated last year: the WWF hopes for 6,000 participants this year.



Chengdu is the first Chinese city to pledge its participation in the year's Earth Hour. Children come in panda costumes to start the countdown.

IC Photo

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Cooking oil goes from trash to table

Hidden health risks of low-budget eateries

By Li Zhixin

Between 2 million and 3 million tons of used cooking oil has found its way back onto dining tables: this time laced with carcinogens.

Food safety has once again been called into question by a food-science engineering professor's claims last Thursday.

Danger may be exaggerated

Although He Dongping, the 53-year-old professor at Wuhan Polytechnic University, said Wednesday that the amount and toxicity of recycled cooking oil has been exaggerated by the media, his words have done little to stem the uproar.

Recycled cooking oil, dubbed "drainage oil," is usually made from discarded kitchen waste that has been refined and used to prepare meals at restaurants and cafeterias. Although it appears clean and clear, it contains several highly toxic substances, including the carcinogen aflatoxin, according to the professor's report.

China Youth Daily reported that people consume 2 million to 3 million tons of drainage oil per year. "China consumes 22.5 million tons of cooking oil annually, which means that one in 10 meals in the country may be cooked with these oils," the newspaper quoted He as saying.

But the professor later said the media misinterpreted his statements; he said the figure only represented the total quantity of recycled oil each year.

The professor's paper was based on research he conducted with nine students to find an effective way to detect and identify the use of drainage oil in food production. It also aimed to provide a reference for the government to establish monitoring standards for illegally produced oil.

"Oil is absolutely being reclaimed and rebottled, but we don't have accurate figures to know exactly how often. We have never said specifically that 2 [million] to 3 million tons of dirty oil is returned to restaurants," He said.

Aflatoxin has a toxicity level 100 times greater than white arsenic, but the professor said its content in recycled oil is negligible. "Recycled oil used for cooking won't kill anyone - it's just something that is, ethically speaking, difficult to tolerate," he said.

"There are safer ways to recycle food scraps that don't involve putting them on the dining table again," he said.

Is Beijing safe?

Local authorities nodded and said the capital is safe. Xing Quan, head of the Food Safety and Inspection Service at the Beijing Drug Administration, said the odds of drainage oil being sold in the capital are "slim": local restaurants are required to keep records to prove their grains and oils were sold by licensed distributors.

These documents, were recycled oil to turn up, would make it easy to identify the source of illegal production.

"The quality and safety of the cooking oil



Local officers are busting factories that produce unlicensed "drainage oil."

CFP Photo

The profit margin [of drainage oil] is almost 200 percent. It's easy to understand why the business is so hot.

in Beijing is guaranteed basically," she said.

Drainage oil that is as pure as normal cooking oil is "not economical" for manufacturers to produce, Xing said.

"The capital has a relatively fixed disposal method for kitchen waste. The government has encouraged processing it to make animal feed and fertilizer," said Huang Qian, president of Beijing Goldenway Bio-Technology, the biggest recycler of kitchen waste in the city.

Wu Chuangzhi, director of the Guangzhou Institute of Energy Conversion at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said drainage oil can be also processed into biodiesel which is less expensive than gasoline and burns fully without causing pollution. "If gasoline is cut with a 20 percent mix of biodiesel, it will reduce carbon emissions by 50 percent and sulfur emissions by 70 percent," he said.

Staple of the poor kitchen

But Xing's assumptions fall apart in kitchens that cater to migrant workers and poor students.

The use of drainage oil is rampant in these areas, said Huang Fenghong, deputy director of the Oil Crops Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

"Most of the drainage oil in big cities is sold in the ghetto where regulations are lax and residents can't afford to be picky about sanitation and health," said Tang Gang, a cook who has been in catering for 25 years and who has worked in many cities including Beijing, Nanjing, Guangzhou and Chengdu.

"This oil was on the market as early as the 1990s when I first came to work in Beijing. I still remember that there were people selling drainage oil at Dongjiao Market near Sihui a dozen years ago," he said. "But tougher regulations are pushing a lot of this business out to the suburbs."

Collecting waste oil became a lucrative industry after the cost of cooking oil shot up between 2007 and 2008, Xinhua News Agency reported last Saturday.

Refining one ton of the waste will produce 130 kilograms of cooking oil. With its price being half that of ordinary cooking oil, the illegal industry is assumed to earn profits of 1.5 billion to 2 billion yuan every year, He Dongping said.

"The profit margin is almost 200 percent. It's easy to understand why the business is so hot," he said.

Liang Chen, a restaurateur in Tianjin, said he frequently sees a waste collection wagon in front of his restaurant pumping something from the drains. "Sometimes those old cooking-oil collectors even pay hot-pot restaurants, which waste more oil, for collection rights," he said.

Prevention must start in the kitchen

Processing and trade in drainage oil is supervised by the Administration of Industry and Commerce: when the oil ends up on the dining table it comes under the control of the Ministry of Health.

As with many products that dodge regulators, the right hand doesn't know what the left is doing.

"The country's underground oil refining business is astonishingly mature. There is a whole set of procedures for producing drainage oil," He said.

The country urgently needs to improve waste recycling procedures to prevent the continued use of such oil in food production, he said. But current detection techniques have a low rate of accuracy.

"Preventing the use of drainage oil should start at the source: kitchen waste," the professor said. "The first step is to create an official, standard method to collect and dispose of kitchen waste."

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Reckoning with Chinese Gen-Y

Young Chinese modernized, not Westernized



Young people attend a commemorative anniversary event for the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake.

CFP Photo

Foreigners who visit Chinese cities today would assume that the country is Westernizing. Young people sip latte at Starbucks while texting friends or playing games online, their shopping choices are influenced by trends in Paris, London and Milan, and they speak English peppered with expressions right out of US TV sitcoms. But don't be fooled by appearances.

China's 240 million young people may be modernizing, but

they're also holding tight to traditional values like responsibility for their extended family.

Just take a closer look at the country's Generation-Y.

Chinese Gen Y

It is essential to understand the priorities of the Gen-Y. The group, a demographic born between the 1980s and the mid-'90s, makes up about half of the country's current workforce. Local and foreign firms are trying to effectively manage Gen-Y to remain successful, but

they are struggling.

BusinessWeek recently published in-house research on the Chinese Gen-Y, saying that its urban members are smart, talented and well-educated. In no other generation in Chinese history have so many received such high-quality education – largely because these people are single children born under the country's stringent family-planning policy.

According to studies such as those conducted by the US-based

Guttmacher Institute, China's single children perform significantly better academically than their peers with siblings. They have high expectations for their careers and expect to work diligently to achieve their goals.

China's Gen-Y may not move, look or sound like their grandparents, but their motivations and aspirations are very similar. Chinese Gen-Ys may have been modernized, but they clearly have not been Westernized.

Opinion

Working with Generation-Y

Multinational companies in China need to consider new strategies to manage Gen-Y employees.

Many of these firms have a layer of Gen-X middle managers who tend to be less assertive than their Gen-Y staff. These managers rarely voice opinions in meetings, yet are now supervising a group of young people who have very good English skills, are confident about making their voice heard and are comfortable interacting with foreigners.

The young want to share ideas and take initiative but lack experience. They want to learn but do not want to be told what to do and how to do it. They long for good role models, like Apple CEO Steve Jobs, whom they describe in surveys as cool, creative, successful and having a distinct personal image.

For these Gen-Y members, a good boss is like a kung-fu master who stays in the background, teaching through subtle hints. He is readily available to his employees and trusts them; he is composed and unemotional; he knows how to share his knowledge without talking much, expressing himself in right doses, at the right time and place.

Thus, the immediate bosses of Gen-Y feel squeezed, not respected, and are unable to properly handle their young subordinates.

Effectively managing this group is not about telling them what to do but waiting for the right time to drop by their desk and say, "Have you asked yourself X? Perhaps you might have tried Y?" Difficult to achieve? Yes, but it is important to show Gen-Y workers why they should respect their boss – and then they will.

(*BusinessWeek*)

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Half full or half empty

Capital's empty towers may herald a bubble

By Huang Daohen

"Empty. Completely empty."

These are the only words property brokers can find to describe the local office-leasing market.

Jack Rodman, a veteran in sourced property, was more specific with the tally: half the city's commercial space is vacant.

Could dismal commercial property sales mean a real estate bubble? Will the bubble burst, and if it does, will it rattle the global economy?



While the capital's skyscrapers may seem impressive, most are sitting vacant.

IC Photo

Empty buildings

Looking south from Pacific Century Center, the Beijing headquarters of IBM, Nokia and Boeing, is one of the first visible structures the 150-meter office towers, SOHO Nexus Center, in the city's CBD area.

It is empty.

Farther along are two 30-story office towers under construction. Dirt gathers in their doorways, where boarded-up fences advertise coming attractions: "an iconic landmark," "an international wonderland."

Photographing these fancy office buildings is a hobby for Jack Rodman, who has made a career of selling distressed real estate from Los Angeles to Tokyo. "I took these pictures to try to impress people with the massive oversupply," Rodman says.

"Beautiful buildings, but no tenants," says Rodman, 63, CEO of the Beijing-based Global Distressed Solution, which deals with private equity and hedge funds.

For the past six years, Rodman has lived in Beijing where he served as financial advisor to three top Chinese banks. In his spare time, he strolls the city to photograph these "see-through" buildings.

The capital's construction boom began in 2006 amid preparations for the 2008 Summer Olympics. Now, 20 months after the Games ended, the city continues to dazzle by night, with floodlights dancing across the skyline and laborers working through the night.

By Rodman's calculations, since 2006, 150 million square meters of commercial real estate has been developed.

That does not include the government's own huge projects, he

If everyone were to sell their homes at the same time, the inventory surplus would cause a bubble and push down prices.

says. "The scale of development is unprecedented in the world."

The Chicago-based real estate broker Jones Lang LaSalle estimates that in the city's central business district, the commercial vacancy rate would reach 29.2 percent. Rodman says the actual rate is closer to 50 percent after accounting for the towers that are completed but are not on the market.

Jones Lang LaSalle says in its recent report that 1.2 million square meters of office space in Beijing will hit the market this year.

Looming bubble in real estate?

Soaring commercial property vacancy rates usually herald a real estate bubble.

According to Jones Lang LaSalle, at the end of 2009 the commercial vacancy rate exceeded 15 percent in Shanghai and Guangzhou, while a healthy vacancy rate stands at around 10 percent.

But the speculation of a real estate bubble is not new.

In January, the *New York Times* published a story warning that China's property bubble is heading for a crash. Housing prices rose across the nation the last nine months, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

In a country still riding a 30-year economic miracle, it's not hard to find people who predict housing prices will rise forever.

Yao Shiwen is one believer.

Yao, in her early 30s, is a real estate agent at Homelink, a local property broker. In late 2008, she spent all her savings to buy a two-bedroom apartment on the city's outskirts. The property's value has climbed 50 percent.

"The price will keep going up, gradually," says Yao, who, like many others, moved to Beijing for job opportunities. She says the demand for real estate will not slow as the country's rural residents make their exodus to the cities.

"I am an example," she says.

But after five years working in real estate, Yao says there are problems in the real estate sector, one of which is excess inventory.

"While office workers cannot afford a house, other buyers have three or four homes," Yao says, noting that many buyers are wealthy residents outside Beijing.

"Some people made a lot of money on the stock market in 2006 and came and invested in the capital's real estate market," Yao says. "They buy it and sit on it."

Yao says some completed residential buildings still have vacant units. If everyone were to sell their homes at the same time, the inventory surplus would cause a bubble and push down prices.

Bubble with Chinese characteristics

If there is a bubble in the

property sector, it is a Chinese bubble that won't cause large damage, says Zhao Xiao, economics professor at the University of Science and Technology Beijing.

First of all, Zhao says there are different national conditions between China and the West. In the West, especially in the US and Japan, the real estate crash followed a collapse in finance.

But in China, the financial industry is comparatively stable as it is isolated, Zhao says.

Zhao, a specialist in government economics, says a more important problem lies in consumption.

"Chinese people have a peculiar attitude toward home ownership," Zhao says. An old saying which many still believe, "san shi er li," says a man should be independent by the age of 30.

That means owning a home, no matter how big or small.

That's why young people think about buying a home as soon as they graduate, Zhao says. But in the West, people care less about owning a home.

Zhao says he has many foreign friends and most of them rent. "Even in their 40s they are not homeowners, but they live very happy lives."

"It's a different attitude."

If there is a property bubble in China, it won't be a terrifying one, Zhao says. The strong desire to own a home means the real estate fountain will never run dry.

But Zhao says the government should pay attention to a consumption bubble instead of the housing price bubble.

"That is a real social and psychological problem," he says, "if people, especially the youngsters, don't consume, China's economy will be doomed."

Who will grab Google's ex-slice of the market?

Google announced Tuesday morning that it had stopped censoring its Chinese-language search engine Google.cn and redirected Chinese mainland users to another portal in Hong Kong.

Google's earlier threats to pull out of China and its latest move to reroute traffic to Hong Kong were just "publicity stunts," said a netizen named Ding Wei on the Internet industrial network sootoo.com.

"Google's redirecting Google.cn to Google.com.hk is a compromised decision reflecting the company's desire to save its reputation in China," the netizen said.

Google said Tuesday it still intended to continue research and development and to maintain sales staff on the mainland.

Experts interviewed by Xinhua said they believed Google's latest move was mainly out of business and market concerns, adding that Baidu and other Internet companies doing business in China will benefit from Google's withdrawal.

"Google censors its results in 25 countries, but why did it only leave the Chinese mainland? Because it cannot beat Baidu," said Dr. Wang Yu, a Nanjing University lecturer.

"Google will not give up its smart-phone operating system Android or other partnerships with domestic Internet companies because, unlike Google.cn, they are promising," said Wang, who specializes in network information studies.

The domestic search giant Baidu would not be the only beneficiary of Google's exit.

"Google's 30 percent market share in search services on the mainland will be absorbed not only by search engine rivals but also companies doing other search-related businesses," said Li Zhi, a senior analyst with Analysys International, a leading Chinese Internet consulting company.

According to Analysys, Baidu occupies about 60 percent of the market share. Sohu's Sogou, Tencent's Soso and other new comers including Microsoft's Bing were eyeing Google's share of the market, analysts said.

Microsoft's Beijing office said in an email to Xinhua on Tuesday that the company regarded China as the most important online search-service market.

"The pull out is the price to pay for Google's move to politicize commercial issues," Li Zhi said.

Sean Tzou, CEO of Trina Solar Limited, a US joint venture based in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, said the biggest challenge for many joint ventures is being willing and able to adapt to the local environment. (Xinhua)

The elusive search for privacy

Bro. Sharp's new look disappoints netizens



Bro. Sharp still smokes, but many say he no longer looks sharp.
CFP Photo

By Huang Daohen

The drama involving Xilige, or Brother Sharp, should have reached a happy ending when the mentally unstable homeless man was reunited with his family and taken back home.

But it appears the public is not yet ready to let him fade into obscurity. Accounts of his new life and accompanying photos still abound, with netizens expressing disappointment over his new look.

Bro. Sharp, a 34-year-old beggar in downtown Ningbo and who was later iden-

tified as Cheng Guorong from rural Jiangxi Province, became an overnight Internet sensation late February when netizens were captivated by his good looks and fashionable attire.

Beijing Today reported March 5 that Cheng was turned over to authorities by netizens, but he refused help from the local government.

Good news came the same day when Cheng was reunited with his mother and younger brother in a Ningbo hospital with the help of netizens and the media. Cheng

returned to his hometown with his family, but could not leave his past life behind: local media pursued him, while curious people traveled from other towns to see him.

New photos show that Cheng has shaved his beard and has changed out of his "street" clothes. "Bro. Sharp looks less sharp now," one netizen said.

While the those photos are labeled "Bro. Sharp's new life," many wonder how many people really care about the individual Cheng Guorong. Are his "fans" simply voyeurs with too much time on their hands?

Comment

Be sensitive to Bro. Sharp's desires

Seeing Bro. Sharp crying, many netizens felt bad about his situation. So they went and offered help, regardless of how Bro. Sharp actually felt. But the truth could be that he only wanted to be left alone and return to a normal life. Did the reporters realize they were the reason he cried?

It's a good thing his family was able to find him, but he might have wanted to make it on his own rather than rely on help from others.

— Roberto Chen,
editor with Xinhua

Don't mess with his peaceful life

I hope his life takes a turn for the better. But how can some individuals or members of the media exploit Bro. Sharp for their own gain? It's not like he's that famous, and he's certainly not rich. Just don't mess with his peaceful life.

— Filx Pallis, PR adviser

Rarity creates sensation

This created a sensation because you rarely see mentally disturbed people on the streets in major Chinese cities. I guess most of them are hidden away by their families. In smaller Canadian cities, you see them everywhere in public.

— Carl, business consultant from Canada

Sacrifice for entertainment

No ordinary person should have to be sacrificed on the altar of entertainment. It looks like this was the case with Bro. Sharp, who was snared by the claws of the "human flesh search engine."

— Jin Wong, media critic in Beijing

Water-splashing festival meets severe drought

By Zhao Hongyi

Members of the Dai ethnic minority group in Yunnan Province must reconsider how they will celebrate their annual water-splashing festival, called Songkran Festival, in the face of the worst drought in south China in a century.

Songkran, a Sanskrit word that means "change of fortune," is similarly celebrated in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. Splashing water is a way to welcome the new year and wish for good fortune.

However, the festival, celebrated April 13 to 15 in southwestern Yunnan Province, is in peril this year because of a drought that has threatened water supplies in the southwest.

The drought became pronounced at the beginning of March and affects 50 million people in provinces including Sichuan and Guizhou. For days, Chinese media have been dominated with stories of farmers crying in front of their

parched fields, having given up hope of a harvest in fall; businessmen hoarding rice supplies in anticipation of food shortage; and celebrities making donations to help ease the misery.

The problem is so serious that Premier Wen Jiabao inspected the drought-hit areas last week and called on the whole country to help conserve water resources.

The water shortage has put the Songkran Festival under harsh scrutiny, with some sectors saying the country should adopt more environment-friendly practices, including giving up the Songkran Festival.

As of press time, Yunnan's provincial tourism bureau said the festival, with its deep significance to the Dais, will not be postponed or cancelled. "But we will discuss wiser ways to celebrate it, such as controlling the number of participants and the volume of water used," Tian Jia, a tourism official, said.



People celebrating the Songkran Festival in Yunnan Province last year. IC Photo

Comment

Way to promote environment protection

A drought affecting more than 50 million people is unprecedented in a century! Considering the shortage of fresh water throughout the country, we should control the use of water during the festival. I'm sure the local minority will understand the need for these measures.

This is also a way to promote environmental protection, and adds new

meaning to a thousand-year-old tradition. The government will play a crucial role in educating the people and implementing regulations.

— Cheng Jiabei, commentator, Nanfang Daily

Give the option to locals

We should learn from the experience of Israel, where water is a precious commodity. The country has developed sophisticated technologies and systems to conserve water, such as water recycling and desali-

nation of seawater.

Israelis have a water-splashing festival for children. Their government has never ordered a stop to the celebration, but over the years it has seen a decline in the number of participants. The main point here is that locals be given an option of celebrating the festival.

— Wang Jian, commentator, Voice of China

Cancel the festival for this year

The festival should be cancelled this year.

On the one hand, many people are endangered by a shrinking supply of drinking water, but on the other hand, some will pour water on the ground to celebrate.

— Li Xu, local resident in Yunnan

Respect culture

People should keep in mind that the Songkran is a cultural tradition with a long and sacred history.

— Wang Chuantao, a columnist for the Beijing Youth Daily

The generous spirit of a beautiful voice



Photo provided by Jess Meider

By Chu Meng

New Yorker Jess Meider is a familiar sight at fashion events in Beijing. Or should we say a familiar sound?

Meider, 39, who has called the capital home for 12 years, is the vocalist for Jungle Cat, a five-member drum-and-bass group formed in 2005. She is also part of a jazz quartet, holds solo acoustic shows, writes songs and teaches yoga.

Her band plays at big live music venues like Yugong Yishan and Keep in Touch. Now, they are busy rehearsing for Meider's solo performance at The Orange Tree, in Gulou, April 10.

A few minutes of conversation with Meider will reveal the musician is a deeply spiritual person, a quality that comes out in her songs. And seeing her perform live is like getting shot with a big dose of delight, insight and creativity.

"Music is not about playing for people. It's about sharing with people through melodies. Poems are about sharing through words, and yoga, through body language. For me,

they're the same; they're about inspiring others by sharing your spirit. That's why I do so many different things," Meider says animatedly, clad in a yoga outfit, her curly bob moving in rhythm with her speech.

The artist says her next plan is to produce an album of electronic music. "I'm excited about the electronic stuff," she says, adding that local artists and those from Europe and the US have helped her understand the genre better.

Meider's musical talent was evident from a young age, and her parents enrolled her in piano lessons when she was 12. But she never considered music as a profession, especially when she was accepted into Carnegie Mellon University's creative writing program.

She changed directions after a trip to Boston to see a friend who was studying at the Berklee College of Music. She realized she had a deeper desire to study songwriting, and made a shift to Berklee.

After graduating college in 1995, Meider moved to New

York City where she fell in love. When her boyfriend's work took him to Beijing two years later, Meider followed.

"Coming to China was like the shakeup," she explained. "There is an assault on your senses all the time, everywhere. You have no choice but to open up or close up. Those who close up leave and those that open up expand in ways they never imagined, and probably could not have elsewhere."

When she first arrived in the capital, Keep in Touch was one of the few places to hear live music. There she performed solo one day and another day with her jazz quartet.

Though she is getting busier and becoming more in-demand, Meider says she does not want to get swallowed up by the commercial side of music. "I do it not to get attention but because there is a joy, a connection. I do not feel that the music industry fosters this. Which is why I'm not interested in going on a three-month tour and losing my creative energy, my life force," she says.

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www.expatshowbeijing.com

German Pavilion showcases balanced urban development

By He Jianwei

The German pavilion at the Shanghai Expo intends to become a model of a 21st-century city: one that balances innovation and tradition, renewal and preservation, urbanity and nature, community and the individual and work and leisure.

The pavilion presents solutions to today's most pressing urban problems, like the need for more eco-friendly construction materials. From a distance, visitors will already see the reflective, translucent and lightweight material that covers the building's outer walls.

"The shiny silver material reduces heat inside the pavilion and turns it into a canopy of light in the evening," Lennart Wiechell, the chief architect, said.

On the south side of the building are solar cell panels and bionic materials that "demonstrate the energy source of the future: silicon," Wiechell said.

Inside are exhibits on German urban development projects: a car-sharing scheme being practiced in the southern city of Ulm and a water purification system for Berlin's Spree River.

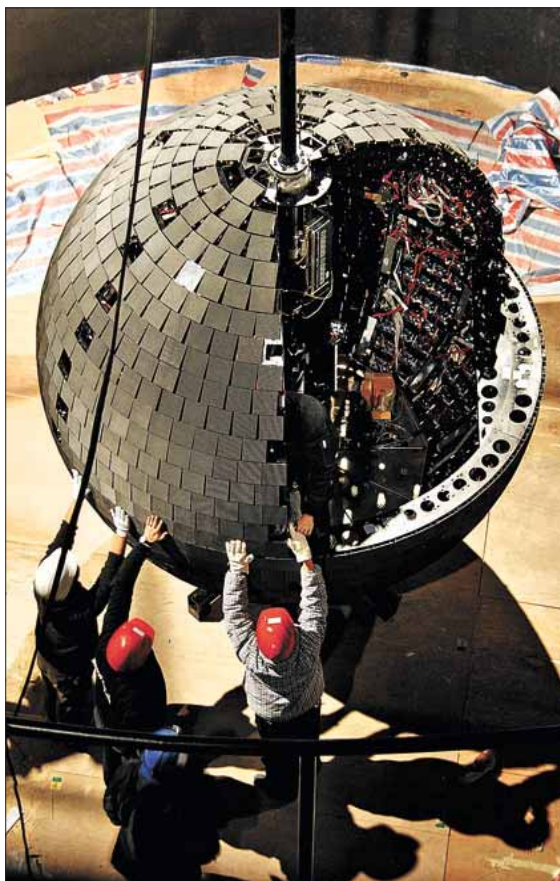
The cities of Bremen, Dusseldorf, Freiburg and Hamburg are also showing model projects as part of the "Urban Best Practices" exhibition, which includes 50 cities.

Dusseldorf, a business and financial center in the west, is presenting the story of its transformation from a heavily industrialized city to an eco-friendly one. "Near the bank of the Rhine River, the municipal government has rebuilt its harbor, which has improved the city's ecological environment," German Ambassador Michael Schaefer said at a Beijing press conference Tuesday.

Dietmar Schmitz, commissioner general of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, said the expo gives Germany a chance to show its economic strength and its role as an international leader in innovation.

"The Expo plays in the same league as the Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cup," Schmitz said.

The German pavilion team is expecting up to 45,000 visitors per day and at least 8 million during the course of the Expo, from May 1 to October 31. Themed "Better City, Better Life," the Shanghai Expo aims to address urban challenges of the 21st century.



The Energy Source Sphere forms the heart of the Shanghai Expo's German Pavilion. Photo provided by German Embassy

Diplomats discuss culture's influence on fashion

By He Jianwei

Innovation in fashion is a product of cultural exchanges, Italy's Deputy Trade Commissioner Alessandro Gerbino said at the Diplomats' Fashion Salon, an event that gathered some 40 diplomats to discuss the influence of culture on fashion.

Gerbino compared advancements in Italy's fashion to making gelato, or ice cream. "We introduce flavors from other countries into our ice cream. Like ice cream, Italian fashion incorporates elements from many cultures but the finished product is distinctly Italian," he said.

European designers draw inspiration from Africa, Asia and South America, such as France's Yves Saint Laurent who adopted Moroccan elements into his creations,

said Nouria Elalami Hakim, wife of Morocco's ambassador.

"He adopted the lines of the *djellaba* [a long, loose-fitting outer robe with full sleeves] to create sumptuous flowing dresses and was also inspired by the men's *burnous* [a long cloak of coarse woolen fabric with a hood] to create his own shapes and to transform it into a pink cloak," Hakim said.

"The designer once said it was with great emotion and pride that he put together shows featuring Moroccan caftans, jewels and embroidery," she said, adding that Saint Laurent has said he considers Morocco his second home.

Every year, a caftan show takes place in Morocco and international fashion designers descend on the North African city to check out the latest cuts and fabric

colors. Morocco's fashion is one of the country's iconic exports, and many international celebrities favor its caftan - big names like Hollywood actor Leonardo Di Caprio, British singer Victoria Beckham and former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Guyana's fashion, meanwhile, capitalizes on multiculturalism. Half of the South American country's population is descended from Indian workers of the Dutch West India Company who settled there in the 17th century; a third of its people are descendants of Africans who were brought in as slaves in the 18th century; and the rest are American Indians, Europeans and Chinese.

Guyana's charge d'affaires, Choo An Yin, showed photos of a local fashion show with an



Nouria Elalami Hakim

Photo provided by Septwolves

Indian theme.

Native designers also use gold, diamonds and other gems that abound in Guyana. "It is said that Guyana is the location of the lost city of gold discussed in a 16th-century legend," Yin said.

Indian Embassy offers free Hindi classes

By Han Manman

The Indian Embassy is offering free Hindi classes at its cultural center in Beijing and two more Chinese universities established Hindi departments this year.

Trade between India and China has rapidly grown in recent years, and China has become India's second largest trade partner. But on both sides of the border, businessmen barely understand each other's language and culture.

Peking University sought to solve the problem in 2007 by establishing the country's first Center for Indian Studies. With rising demand for Hindi-speaking Chinese speakers, two more universities in Kunming and Guangzhou opened Hindi departments, bringing the total to nine.

"My students see business and job opportunities in India. Some are motivated by the desire to learn Indian music," Devendra Shukla, professor at Peking University's Center of Indian Studies, said.

Shukla is also among the volunteers who give Hindi lessons at the Indian Embassy. The free classes, held every Sunday from 3 to 5 pm, began March 6. There are two courses offered: Hindi for Beginners and Business Hindi. Classes are conducted in English and the teaching materials are free.

A craze over Bollywood movies and new economic opportunities in India is fueling Chinese people's interest in Hindi, said Jiang Jing Kui, head of the department of South Asian studies at Peking University.

Jiang said there were only 10 Chinese nationals studying Hindi when he first signed up for classes in 1985.

"These days, we teach students about India's modernization and economic growth, along with the Hindi language. We believe India's economic growth will bring a lot of opportunities for Chinese youth," Jiang said.

A report by the *Times of India* said the number of institutions in China that teach Hindi, the Indian national language, still pales in comparison to the 150 Indian universities and dozens of institutes offering Chinese language classes across India.

Indian Culture Center

Where: Room 1101-1103, East Tower, LG Twin Towers, B-12 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6568 3218 (Look for Sarah or Professor D. Shukla)

Argentinian tango masters conduct workshop in town

By Liang Meilan

Argentinian tango masters Andres Laza Moreno and Isabel Acuna are holding classes in town till April 4 as part of their ongoing Asian tour. The Beijing workshop featuring eminent Argentinian dancers is a quarterly event sponsored by local dance groups Beijing Tango and Tango Chino Club.

"We use these special events to promote Argentinian tango culture," Stefanie Eschenlohr, founder of Beijing Tango, said.

Moreno and Acuna, both from Buenos Aires, were welcomed with a Milonga, or tango party, at the 700-year-old Hong'en Temple in Zhangwang Hutong last Saturday.

As guests of honor, they performed three Argentinian tangos. "They performed a traditional, very intimate style of tango, which some people say is the essence, the soul of tango," Eschenlohr said. "We're very happy and proud that we could stage this event in such a beautiful, historical venue."

Acuna said the dance is not about show. "The beauty of tango lies in the perfect harmony and intimacy between the dancers. It is a very sensual dance and relies on the perfect communication between the man and the woman," she said.

Beijing band DOU China also performed at the event, as did two students from the Central Conservatory of Music, Wang Han on the accordion and Fang Xiang on the violin.

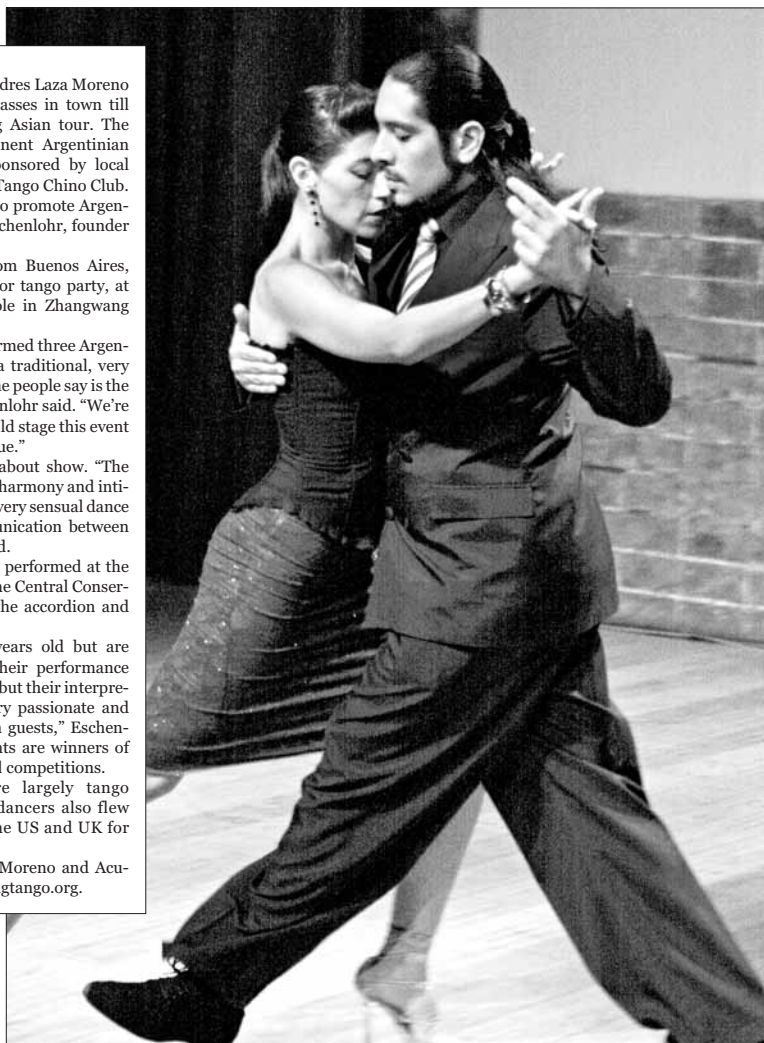
"The two girls are just 18 years old but are already promising musicians. Their performance was not only technically brilliant, but their interpretation of the pieces was also very passionate and really impressed our Argentinian guests," Eschenlohr said, adding that the students are winners of several national and international competitions.

The party's attendees were largely tango enthusiasts in the capital, but dancers also flew in from Shanghai, Singapore, the US and UK for the occasion.

For more information about Moreno and Acuna's Beijing workshop, visit beijingtango.org.

Argentinian tango masters
Andres Laza Moreno and
Isabel Acuna

Photo provided by
Beijingtango.org



Nominations open for Australia China Alumni Awards

By Zhao Hongyi

The Australia China Alumni Association (ACAA) and CPA Australia are now accepting nominations for the annual Australia China Alumni Awards.

The awards aim to celebrate the achievements of China-based Australian university alumni across a variety of fields, through recognitions in areas like entrepreneurship, research and innovation, new media and community service.

This year, the ACAA is giving away nine awards, including two new ones: the IELTS Alumni Award for Women in Leadership and the Telstra Alumni Award for Internet Communication Technology and New Media.

For nominations to be valid, the nominating person must obtain consent from the nominee.

Alumni are permitted to nominate themselves, but must



Australian ambassador Geoff Raby (center) toasting the recipients of the 2009 Australia China Alumni Awards in Beijing.

Photo provided by ACAA

refer someone who will second their nomination; both Chinese and English language speakers are accepted.

"Alumni" pertain to Chinese nationals who have studied in Australia, graduates of a China-based joint program with Australia and Australians who have

made China their home.

This is the Australia China Alumni Awards' second year, and the awards presentation will be held in Shanghai on July 10. There will also be a reception for finalists at the Shanghai Expo's Australian Pavilion on May 25.

Last year's awardees include

Wing Mao Hui, chairman and executive director of Shimao Property Holdings; Lawrence Lam, vice president of finance at Mary Kay China; and Chao Zhao, deputy head of Tsinghua University's industrial design department.

Nomination forms and additional information can be found at austchinaalumni.org/awards. Aside from submission online, ACAA also accepts nominations via fax and mail. The deadline for nominations is April 19.

Nomination forms may be sent to:

Sarah Stewart
Suite 1007, OOCL Plaza, 841 Yan'an Zhong Lu, Jing'an District, Shanghai 200040
Tel: 021 6289 2557
Fax: 021 6289 2554
Email: awards@austchinaalumni.org, info@austchinaalumni.org

Event

Discussing expats' life in Beijing

Mandarin Connections School is hosting a party for expats in which they can talk about their experiences living and learning Chinese in the capital. Lucky attendees will receive a voucher for 150 yuan worth of free Chinese classes at Mandarin Connections School.

Where: Mandarin Connections School, Room 2611, 1 Blue Castle International Center, Xi Dawang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 26, 6-10 pm

Tel: 8599 7183

Cost: Free

International Exhibition of Fashion and Jewelry

Twelve fashion designers and 12 jewelry designers from South Korea and China will work together in pairs for an exhibition themed Wind of Asia. The event, which will be the opening exhibition of Beijing Fashion Week, is sponsored by 3+3 Art Space, Linestudio Culture Transmission Center and the Beijing Center Academy of Fine Arts Fashion Studio.

Where: 3+3 Art Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 26 - April 7, daily, 10 am - 5 pm

Tel: 6437 3432

Cost: Free

Tiger, Tiger Family Day at The Hutong

To celebrate the Year of the Tiger, The Hutong is hosting a tiger-themed party for parents and their young ones. Activities include tiger-cookie making, tiger-face painting and tiger movements, and are recommended for children ages 2 to 8. The event aims to raise funds for the Beijing Migrant School Teacher Training Program of JUMP! Foundation, a global organization that works to engage, inspire and empower young people.

Where: The Hutong, 1 Jiudaowan Zhongxian Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: March 28, 1-4pm

Tel: 15901046127

Cost: 120 yuan per child, free for parents

Seminar by Dr. Gary Olive

The Beijing International Christian Fellowship (BICF) is bringing Dr. Gary Olive to Beijing for a lecture on "Becoming an Emotionally and Relationally Intelligent Person." Olive, has more than 30 years' experience working with leaders in both the private and public sectors.

Where: BICF 21st Century Chapel A, 2/F, 21st Century Hotel, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 28, 2-5 pm

Tel: 8454 3468

Donation: 10 yuan

(By Liang Meilan)

Local public hospital accepts international insurance

By Chu Meng

The WJ International Medical Center under the General Hospital of the Armed Police Forces became the country's first public hospital to accept international health insurance Monday. The center offers full medical services, including traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and has multilingual staff.

The center, established in cooperation with Thailand's Piyavate hospital, specializes in brain surgery, cardiovascular operations, bone fractures and surgery of the neck and spinal cord, as well as post-operative patient care and stem-cell treatments. It has long been involved in international medical programs, including medical aid following the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti January 12.

Gao Ge, the head nurse, said patients with international health insurance are welcome to consult with specialists from all departments. "They will be charged the same as Chinese patients. However, as a special outpatient service, all foreign patients have to make a reservation - except in cases of emergency," Gao told *Beijing Today*.

Besides having English-speaking doctors and nurses, the center also has foreign staff members. "All of our nurses have passed English language tests. Translators for other foreign languages are also available," she said.

It offers one-on-one nursing care and has 25 single rooms, including four VIP rooms. Each room is equipped with a private toilet and bath and broadband internet.

Members of Beijing's expat community welcomed the development.

Hilde Sorlie, 29, an official at



The WJ International Medical Center is the first public hospital to accept international health insurance.

Photo provided by The General Hospital of Armed Police Forces

the Finnish embassy and who has been in Beijing for more than two years, said the center's new policy will ease the financial burden on foreigners, especially students and budget travelers.

"Few public hospitals accept the international health insurance bought by the embassy for employees like me in Beijing - though I know a lot of them are state-owned 3A hospitals," Sorlie said, referring to top-grade medical centers. She said she had no choice but to go to high-priced foreign-run clinics.

Sorlie said the clinics' costly fees resulted in policy holders like her being downgraded by their insurance companies. "A lower rating means a higher insurance fee the next year. Furthermore,

I like to have traditional Chinese medical treatments once in a while, which none of the clinics can offer," she said.

Yin Dakui, former vice minister of health, hailed WJ International Medical Center's new service to foreigners and said, "hospitals in China have made tremendous progress in recent years, and some of our hospitals have been internationally recognized as being able to not only provide first-class treatment to local residents, but also to foreign patients."

Yin said the opening of more international medical centers in the capital should also help boost medical tourism, because treatments here often cost only a third of what they do in Europe or the

US. In the States, a heart bypass surgery costs \$130,000 (887,000 yuan); a similar procedure at Beijing's WJ International Medical Center costs 60,000 yuan.

"The emergence of institutions providing international medical services is a sign that Beijing is building itself into a world metropolis," Yin said, adding that TCM practices like acupuncture, massage and the use of herbal medicine are increasingly becoming popular abroad.

WJ International Medical Center

Where: 4/F Building 5, The Chinese People's Armed Police Force General Hospital, Yongding Lu, Haidian District

Open: Daily, 9 am - 5 pm

Tel: 6815 5158 (reservations)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I listened to Kunqu opera a few times and now I want to learn it. Can you recommend any schools?

Check out the Beijing Kunqu Performance Association, a world-renowned Kunqu research and performance organization that has been around for 50 years. It has regular classes given by prominent Kunqu artists, including lessons for beginners. Visit its office at 4 Shuiboji Hutong, Dongcheng District or call 6327 4475.

I'm looking for traditional Chinese furniture for my new apartment. Where can I find reasonably priced pieces in town?

There are dozens of secondhand furniture markets all around Beijing. Below are some of the best known:

Panjiayuan Bazaar

This is the biggest secondhand-goods market in the country and mainly sells Chinese furniture, artwork and decorations made by ethnic groups. It is only open Saturdays and Sundays.

Where: 18 Hawei Lu, Chongwen District

Tel: 8779 2173

Beifang Second Hand Bazaar

Where: 1 Shangzhuang Dong Lu, Shijingshan District

Tel: 6817 8337

Beijing Antique City

Where: 21 Dongsanhu Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5960 9999

(By Liang Meilan)

Earthworms for home gardens

By Annie Wei

With the growing concern for food safety and environmentally-friendly practices, more and more local families have started composting and growing flowers and vegetables in their balconies.

Home composting, which involves the use of earthworms, has long been popular in Japanese households but is a new trend in China.

Since last year, Han Baixing from the China Volunteers group has encouraged local residents to raise earthworms. His project includes swapping the worms' waste for organic fruits and vegetables grown by a farm in Mengtougou.

People interested in growing their own food do not need to have their own plot of land; they can easily do this at home with the help of earthworms.

Keep worms away from garden area

Most people think that



Build a cozy home for earthworms at home.

CFP Photo

putting earthworms in their garden will automatically fertilize the soil. This is not the case, said Chen Lin, a member of Greensoc.org, a Shanghai-

based environmental NGO that promotes raising earthworms among urban residents.

The worms eat rotten food, and if you throw leftovers in the

garden, it will raise the soil's temperature up to 50 C as the food decays. Meanwhile, the worms might migrate to other areas of the house. Chen suggests having special worm bins.

Make a compost bin

Han says composting begins with a garbage box. Drill some holes on a plastic bucket's bottom and cover, and put the bucket on a plate. Place some stones in the bucket and cover it with a filtering cloth. It is now a comfortable habitat ready for the worms.

After a few weeks, you will detect liquid oozing onto the plate. This is produced by the worms. Dilute the liquid with water in a 1 to 100 ratio. The solution can then be used to water your plants. It will make them grow healthy and protect them from pests.

Han says earthworms feast on vegetable and fruit peel and dog waste. Dry substances like nut shells should first be softened by soaking them in water.

Note that rotten vegetables and leftover food with too much salt can poison the worms.

Buy the right earthworm

There are special earthworm farms if you are looking to buy some, Chen says. You can also find the worms at flower and pet markets. Choose red earthworms used as fish and turtle bait.

Han says that under ideal conditions, 1 kilogram of earthworms can consume the equivalent weight of kitchen garbage a day and produce half a kilogram of waste.

The worm's fermenting process will produce a sour smell, so take good care of your compost bins.

Retrieve fertilized soil

Sieve bin to separate fertilized soil from the worms. Another way is to place the bin under the sun: Expose the portion where the most worms are gathered and they will crawl to part in shadows. Now you can move that soil to your garden.

What if Lei Feng ser

A set of photos named *The New Story of Lei Feng* by Dai Xiang has restored hope for Lei Xiang in modern times: he is seen reading *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* at McDonald's, removing advertisements from poles and posing for a Canon ad.

Lei still appears in his green military uniform, but when juxtaposed with today's surroundings the timeless figure is clearly living in the wrong era. **Photographing ideas**

The 12 photos of *The New Story of Lei Feng* are on display at MR Gallery in 798 Art District. The exhibition is part of a retrospective show that will last four months through the end of this month.

The Lei in the photographs is a 40-centimeter doll purchased by the artist. Dai's students, friends and hired models posed as extras. The scenes and the doll were photographed separately and composed in one picture.

Critics dub the work as "idea photography," as opposed to traditional photography, which records real-world situations.

Dai, 32, a native of Tianjin, has been making composite photographic art using dummies and puppets since 2004. His early works use dolls and puppets from online games. For Dai, the form offers a way to recreate an imagined picture in the real world.

"I like to mix reality and the virtual world in my works," he said. "After making a digital synthesis, it forms a contrast and conflict between the real and the virtual."

He completed *The New Story of Lei Feng*, which tells Lei's story as he goes from a common soldier to a modern icon, in 2007.

"In Chinese, 'ou' can mean both 'idol' and 'doll,' terms deeply connected to each other," he said.

Continuing Lei's story

Lei left a diary, with more than 100 articles, recording his life and thoughts over five years. He was the ultimate example of selflessness, modesty and dedication.

Continuing the story today, Lei shows up still in his green military uniform and classic cap with two military bags emblazoned "Serve the people." His 12 photos form a complete story from Lei's first moment of fame to the present day.

The first photo shows Lei standing before Tian'anmen Square with a gun in his hands: behind him is a dog in pet clothes.

Four photos show Lei dedicated to serving other people. He saves a person jumping from a tall building, saves a child from drowning and helps take down the dodgy advertisements stuck to lights and telephone poles.

The last six photos show Lei's recognition as a cultural icon as official leaders visit him in the hospital and the media covers his good deeds; he even poses in an ad for Canon cameras.

Most scenes were photographed in

Tianjin, Dai's hometown, where it was easier to capture the city's changing appearance. In the photo where Lei is cleaning up ads on Rongli Avenue, a nearby 50-year-old structure – almost from Lei Feng's era – was still covered with graffiti of the era: red stars, "Serve the People" and other slogans of that time.

Dai said the building was a former people's commune that had changed to a grain store before being demolished.

"Lei, in my works, is not only a simple individual, but the symbol of a group of legendary figures. Thrusting Lei into today's world, half a century later, where an old icon can clash with the modern era, may inspire people to think about Lei Feng in modern day values."

Trapping the hero

The *New Story of Lei Feng* was first displayed at the Academic Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Photography in Beijing in 2008. Curator Bao Kun wrote a foreword for the exhibition titled "The Hero Forever."

When it showed at Metro Art Gallery (MAG) in Hong Kong in 2009, the curator Wu Zhenrong added the subtitle "Understanding Illusion and Truth."

"For Hong Kong people, Lei Feng is strange. Most people in Hong Kong know little about the mainland hero."

While the previous theme of the exhibition was kept, I hoped to emphasize the relationship between illusion and truth," Wu said on his blog.

Most visitors to the exhibition were young people who were more interested in traditional photography. But Lei Feng was drawing visitors even on the last day.

Hong Kong media reported on the photography show, saying Dai's works were "very creative" and "interpreted illusion and truth in reality from a new angle." However, they lacked the mainland's tremendous enthusiasm and more varied interpretations of the picture.

One visitor was inspired to start a microblog on sina.com.cn in February where he began keeping "Lei Feng's Diary." The blog spins a yarn about Lei's life in a world of consumer culture and social scandals. He based several of the entries on Dai's photos.

"It's a clever way to comment on the latest social topics. I have heard many interpretations of each photo at my exhibition and I welcome more," Dai said.

"Lei has become something 'in vogue' with young people. I don't think Lei's place in current pop culture has anything to do with his spirit or morals."

Both the exhibitions in Lianzhou, Guangdong Province, and Los Angeles this January received international acclaim, especially from the French media and foreign art collectors.

The French *Le Monde* described the hero's journey to modern times an "adventure."



Dai Xiang

By Zhang Dongya

Lei Feng died in an

After the young soldier country to learn from him

Since then, Lei has become a symbol. But what if he lived



Battling the Web

Indie bookstores struggle for spot in 'net age

By He Jianwei

As in the music and film industries, "indie" is synonymous with struggle. But it may be too soon to pen the obituary of the indie bookstore.

In January, one holdout told his story of running an indie bookstore and emphasized the vital role it played in holding together the city's intellectual scene.



Cruel reality

Brick-and-mortar bookstores are on the brink of extinction in the Internet age.

According to statistics from the British Booksellers Association, an indie bookstore closed every week during the 10 months from June 2006 to April 2007.

In 2007, the French Booksellers Association announced the country's indie bookstores were on the verge of extinction: some were purchased by superstores and others faced closure. China is hardly exempt from the trend.

Last year, two Shanghai's bookstores closed after 10 years of operation – many others were pressed out by the price of rent.

According to statistics by the China Marketing Research Association released this January, the indie bookstore count is in free fall.

One of the survivors, Longzhimei Advertising and Culture Bookstore, which has been around for 15 years, has seen decreased turnover the past five years.

But Xu Zhiming, co-owner of the bookstore, thinks he found a way out of the deficit: his experiences are collected in *I Love Running a Bookstore* published by China Citic Press.

Internet, sword of Damocles

Some people blame the shrink on the rise of Internet and e-books.

It's easy to see why: profits at Dangdang.com, one of the country's top online booksellers, last year were double what they were in 2008.

But indie book-

stores on Taobao.com posted profits of over 500 million yuan last year, up from 200 to 300 million yuan in 2008.

Besides solid shops in six cities, Xu runs one on Taobao.com. "The online shop helped us bring in a profit of 700,000 yuan, two times what we made the previous year," Xu said.

The Taobao.com advantage was not a secret.

A year and half ago, Xu was encouraging other owners of indie bookstores to open online shops to compete with Dangdang.com and Amazon.cn – sites which together had 3 billion yuan in sales last year. The Internet can increase exposure for a bookstore.

Although Xu's turnover at his brick-and-mortar shops fell the last five years, the total turnover did not decrease because of his strong online sales. "Only 40 percent of our turnover comes from the brick-and-mortar shops," he said.

Xu spoke confidently about future development when the Regulations on Fair Trade in Books took effect January 8.

The regulation prohibits online book retailers from slashing prices of new releases by more than 15 percent. Xu said the move will help level the playing field for smaller shops. "It is a godsend for indie bookstore owners. Super online shops, like Dangdang and Amazon, will not be able to offer such incredible discounts," he said.

Carving a niche

Although Xu's brick-and-mortar shops lose money, he will not close them. "The

online shop can never replace the real shop, because that is where we make a real connection with readers," he said.

Unlike superstores, indie bookstores have limited space and higher prices – but they may have a hidden value by helping to cultivate and nurture communities of readers.

He is a regular customer of All Sages Bookstore, founded in 1993, which he credits with creating a real sense of community or belonging. "I believe indie bookstores like All Sages will only vanish when print is no longer a medium," he said.

To form a distinctive character is critical for the development of an indie bookstore. Xu told owners and future owners to carefully select what kinds of books to sell and think about what makes their shop unique.

Book Fun, the first shop located in a Soho community, opened in 2006 and is built like a study. "[Soho residents] visit our shop from month to month," Qiu Xiaoshi, the owner, said.

Its second shop at China Central Place was named one of the best indie bookstores by *China Publishing Today*.

Another good example is One Way Street Bookstore, opened in 2006. Its motto is "We read the world." It organizes weekly cultural salons and invites writers, translators and critics to speak.

Exhibitions, poetry readings, documentary screenings and stage drama also take place here: it is a public space for the capital's intellectuals.

A bookstore not only sells books, but also provides abundant cultural life for readers, Xu said.

History of the book scene

There is no specific definition of an indie bookstore, but most are small and sell only certain types of books. They put their readers in contact with authors and critics by arranging lectures and forums.

1990s: There are no historical records of when China got its first indie bookstore, but many opened during this period.

1993: All Sages Bookstore opened in Beijing, becoming a spiritual home for many college students.

1993: SiSyphre Bookstore opened in Zunyi, Guizhou Province, carrying only literature and philosophy books.

It has 11 branches Guizhou, Guangdong Province and Chongqing.

1994: Borges Libreria opened in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, satisfying some readers' special interests.

1995: Forestsong Bookstore opened in Beijing, connecting translators and readers.

1995: Longzhimei Advertising and Culture Bookstore opened in Beijing, selling only books related to advertising. It was the first advertising bookstore in China.

1996: Pioneer Bookstore opened in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. It is considered the second library of Nanjing University.

1997: Jifeng Bookstore opened in Shanghai and became the mecca of intellectuals – it closed last year.

2006: One Way Street Bookstore opened in Beijing, inviting writers, translators and critics to give lectures.

2006: Book Fun opened in Beijing as a space for reading and watching indie movies.

2008: Trends Lounge Bookstore opened in Beijing to serve as a combined gallery, coffee bar and small auditorium.



Indie bookstores have a hidden value by helping to cultivate and nurture communities of readers.

CFP Photo

By Wang Yu

Cameras can easily capture what we see: capturing what we dream is more challenging. But dreamscapes are where pinhole cameras shine. Using the principles of pinhole photography, cameras can reveal a new look at the world we see every day. Making and using a pinhole camera requires little photography experience, and can be a fun project for children. Many professionals experiment with pinhole techniques to create art.

Capturing dreams through a pinhole



Sharan STD-35 paper camera

History bits

The first photograph taken by a pinhole camera was the work of Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster in 1850. The technique became more established in photography during the late 19th century when it was noted for its soft outlines and uniform depth of field.

The earliest description of pinhole photography was published in *De Radio Astronomico et Geometrico Liber* in 1545. Johannes Kepler used the same method to observe sun spots in Prague at the beginning of the 17th century.

NASA funded research into the New Worlds Mission project, which proposes to use a pinhole camera with a diameter of 10 meters and a focal length of 200,000 kilometers to view earth-sized planets in other star systems.

The world's largest pinhole camera was created in 2006 by a team of six photographers and an army of assistants in an abandoned F-18 hangar at the closed El Toro fighter base in Irvine, California. The exposure time was calculated at 35 minutes, and the resulting print was nearly 33 meters wide and 26 meters high.

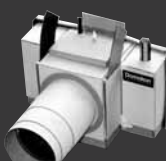
Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day was created and promoted by British photographer Justin Quinnell and is held each year on the last Sunday of April.



Readymech paper camera



Rubikon paper camera



Domokan paper SLR

Things to keep in mind

A smaller pinhole on a thin surface will result in a sharper image as the projected circle of confusion is smaller at the image plane.

As the diameter of the hole approaches the thickness of the material, diffraction will cause the image to blur.

Pinhole cameras are often constructed with a sliding film holder or back so that the distance between the film and the pinhole can be adjusted.

The f-stop of the camera may be calculated by dividing the distance from the pinhole to the imaging plane or film by the diameter of the pinhole: a light meter will probably still be necessary.



The pinhole explained

Pinhole cameras are light-proof boxes with a small hole punched in one side. Light from a scene passes through this single point and projects an inverted image on the film or paper on the opposite side of the box.

The image in the pinhole camera is created on the basis of the rectilinear propagation of light. So a pinhole photo has certain characteristics that we won't find in classical lens photography. Since the process entails a central projection, the images in a pinhole camera are rendered in ideal perspective.

Another special characteristic is the infinite depth of field which allows objects to be captured with equal sharpness – and equal blur – whether they are close or far. The cameras also allow for an extremely wide angle, though the rays of light take much longer to reach the edges of the negative.

Exposure time is normally counted in seconds or minutes, which prevents the photographing of moving subjects.

Leave the lens at home

David Balihar, a Czech photographer, began to take an interest in large-format photography in 1999. However, he sold his SLR camera after he discovered pinhole cameras by Doug Bardell online.

Balihar had heard of the technique before, but it was only then that he realized its artistic potential. He quickly found the creative cameras by Bell and various other enthusiasts and tried his own hand at it. Another thing that played an important role in the early

days of his pinhole interest was the magazine *Pinhole Journal*, edited by the

American pioneer of modern pinhole photography, Eric Renner.

"I was given a plastic camera as a little boy. Many pinhole photographers convert these little toys into pinhole cameras. Unfortunately I do not have it anymore," Balihar says.

As in other countries, the



David Balihar

Czech Republic is home to a number of photographers who experiment with pinhole cameras. There have been some interesting exhibitions and students of photography are sometimes given pinhole assignments.

"Perhaps somebody will eventually emerge as a true star," Balihar says.

In 2001, the 38-year-old photographer started pinhole.cz in both Czech and English. Recently, a paper camera article on the popular creative product blog iXiqi.com linked to the Dirkon camera on Balihar's site and sent him many Chinese viewers.

Building a pinhole camera

The most important thing when building or using a pinhole camera is patience. The Dirkon is an interesting phenomenon – many people

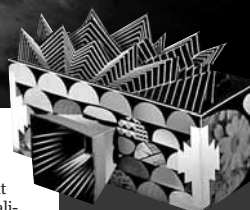
from Balihar's generation in the Czech Republic learned about it in 1979 when one magazine published a cut-out template for building one. Balihar's website still provides a PDF file with the camera template.

"I haven't counted how many pinhole cameras I have but I guess around 30. I have made them over a course of many years. I used to make some very complicated ones that took a lot of time and effort to make, but these days I prefer very simple cameras mostly made from boxes or cans. When I want to take more pictures, I carry a sackful of them," Balihar says.

The photographer's first exhibition in 2002 focused on industrial and city landscapes and the second exhibition one year later showed the forest – real images transformed by pinhole into dreamscapes.

Many pinhole photographers work with a sense of nostalgia and view their work as a continuation of traditional photographic techniques.

"But the most important thing is they give the photographer a range of image manipulating possibilities – extremely wide angles, bent and deformed pictures, transpositions, overlaps and many, many more. Paper cameras can replace the DC in your bag – if you are not in a rush," Balihar says.



Readymech paper camera



Rubikon paper camera



Domokan paper SLR

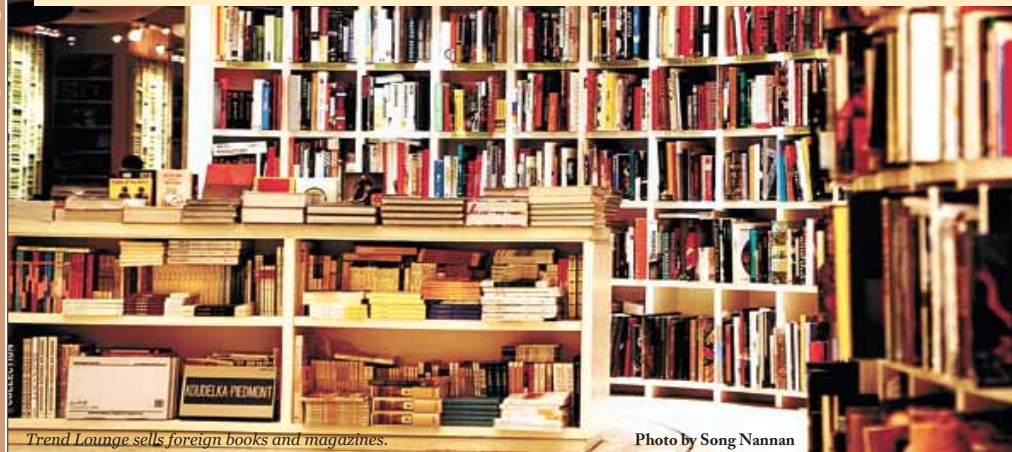


Industrial and city landscapes and the forest were the themes of David Balihar's exhibitions.

Photos provided by David Balihar

Bookstore

Cafe and cultural venue in one



Trend Lounge sells foreign books and magazines.

Photo by Song Nannan

Nail colors for spring and summer

By Annie Wei

Nail colors for Spring and Summer 2010 are rich and strong, much like your breakfast fruit-juice concentrate.

For daily wear, choose pinks and reds such as rose pink, raspberry and dark lavender to say "demure," "sexy" or "mysterious."

Another option is to use two or three colors together. Use a light color as base, then brush the darker ones at the center of the nail or as an accent. This can make your fingers look longer and your hands slimmer.

Women who prefer a

darker, more gothic look can go for metallic dark blue or dark green.

There are an infinite number of nail polish brands on the market, but women who want quality usually get Sally Hansen's from Watson's, Chanel from department stores or OPI at nail salons. But they come at a cost: a bottle of Sally Hansen's averages 98 yuan, Chanel starts at 250 yuan and a manicure using OPI costs around 70 yuan.

A new inexpensive option is Bleunuit, a French brand manu-

factured in Shanghai and which now has counters at Beijing shopping malls. It is currently holding a sale on its older colors: buy one bottle for 35 yuan and two for 50 yuan.

A new Bleunuit release is "earthy" (68 yuan), which has an effect similar to Chanel's Spring 2010 color "taupe."

Women looking for a quick-dry formula should check out another Shanghai brand, The Seventh Sense. Even one coat of its dark colors, like rosy raspberry, will work wonders for women on-the-go. For spring,

it has many adorable colors such as rich red, wood, lake blue and vivid green at 68 yuan a bottle.

It is only available at Sasa beauty bars in Beijing.

Bleunuit

Where: Basement, The Place, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 9 pm

Tel: 6587 1188

The Seventh Sense

Where: Sasa, Oriental Plaza, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

Open: 10 am - 9 pm

Tel: 8518 6036



Bleunuit's nail polish collection for Spring and Summer 2010

Photo provided by Bleunuit

More affordable health care and beauty

By Annie Wei

Thirteen years ago, there were only three Watson's stores in town that offered inexpensive alternatives to the health-care and beauty products found in department stores. Since then, branches of the Hong Kong-based global chain have mushroomed all around Beijing, particularly in office buildings.

Now, Guangdong-based Mannings is looking to replicate Watson's success in the capital. It has opened a dozen outlets here and has plans for more.

Beijing Today checks out what noteworthy products the new player has to offer cash-strapped young professionals

and students.

Its Bulgarian rose handmade soap (10 yuan) smells wonderful and is gentle on the skin. If you're one of those compulsive hand washers, get this for your bathroom or kitchen sink.

We also like the aloe vera and white tea refreshing body lotion (18 yuan for 400 milliliters), Mannings' nose pore strip (10 yuan for 10 pieces) and Maylie wax strip, which costs 60 yuan here but at least 99 yuan in department stores.

Those who are heavily into astrology should check out the astro facial mask; there's a different design for each zodiac sign (10 pieces for 39 yuan).

Mannings also offers quite

a few popular health products from Hong Kong and Taiwan, like black glutinous rice and forest frog's oviduct sweets, a traditional dessert (15 yuan for 250 grams).

There's also yam and multi grain (19 yuan for three packages), a nutritious breakfast made up of brown rice, Job's tears, white rice, red rice, green gram, oat, wheat germ, yam, pumpkin seeds, lotus seeds, sesame, seaweed, green tea and celery. It contains no sugar.

Mannings

Where: Basement, The Place, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 9 pm

Tel: 6587 1188

By Wang Yu

Trends Media Group is known for publishing some of the most popular fashion magazines on the market. But how many people know that it also runs a bookstore/cafe/cultural venue? We're talking about the stylish Trends Lounge on the second floor of The Place, which draws as many foreign customers as locals.

The bookstore's brightly lit, well-designed magazine section is one of its most popular corners. Customers zero in on foreign editions of periodicals like *Wallpaper*, *Monocle*, *Rolling Stones*, *Esquire* and *GQ*. There are also popular titles from the US, UK and Japan. Stocks are updated regularly.

In the book area, beside the Chinese books, are a good number of imported publications on art, history and design. Some of the titles are placed high on the bookshelves and a ladder is needed to retrieve them; approach an employee for assistance. People are welcome to read the books for free.

Those who are preparing for their spring and summer travels can browse the Lonely Planet series of guidebooks.

At the back end of the room is the cafe. Its selection of foods and drinks is limited, but there are some worth noting, like the refreshing ice mocha coffee (25 yuan). Guangdong favorites like braised superior mushroom and fresh abalone (68 yuan) and braised baby napa cabbage (25 yuan) are also on the menu.

Unpurchased books and magazines are not allowed in the cafe. But the white tables and sofas are surrounded by bookshelves, so people can still pick up something to read while enjoying their tea, coffee or juice.

As indicated by its name, there is plenty of room for lounging at Trends Lounge: it has small glass-enclosed private rooms, which need to be booked ahead of time.

Trends Lounge also holds cultural events such as lectures by domestic and foreign writers and artists. People who register for membership will be informed of upcoming events through SMS.

Trends Lounge

Where: L214, 2/F Trends Tower, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm

Tel: 6587 1998

Web:

trendslounge.com.cn



Ginger drinks, 18 yuan

Photos by Huang Xiao



Traditional sweets, 15 yuan

Decoding the flavor of coffee

By Wang Yu

Host Cafe's southern Beijing location is the perfect antidote for those seeking refuge from the noise and crowds downtown. If that isn't good enough, its brews are made using beans from various corners of the globe.

"You can say I'm promoting a culture. But I'd rather say I'm offering quality products to those who want an improvement on the coffee they drink every day," says Zhao Hui, the 40-year-old owner affectionately known to his patrons as "Uncle Beans."

Zhao learned all about coffee when he became a bean importer in 2002 and traveled to major coffee-producing countries such as Brazil, Columbia and Kenya. In search of the perfect roasting method, he went to Europe several times and there discovered the Probat coffee roaster, which now dominates one corner of the cafe.

The two-month old shop is divided into an outer and inner section, like the European cafes that served as its model. Space-like cheap rent – is a luxury that only businesses outside the center have. Like your regular cafe, the Host's outer room contains the counter, coffee machines and table-and-sofa sets.

The inner room, which comprises about three-quarters of the shop's floor space, serves as the storeroom cum display room. Shelves are filled with bags of imported coffee beans and introductory information about them. Coffee amateurs can learn the basic difference between beans by having a sniff and a taste.

This is also where Zhao's Probat roaster can be found. Manufactured in Germany, the machine is considered the Rolls-Royce of coffee roasters, Zhao says. Customers who purchase beans can have them roasted on the spot. Zhao says they are best brewed within two weeks of roasting.

"Most people think the beans develop their flavor during roasting, but I believe the flavor is just hidden inside the beans. The whole process is like decoding: invest patience and minutes later you will smell the coffee's bittersweet aroma," Zhao says. Every week, he also holds a free lecture and roasting demo at the cafe.

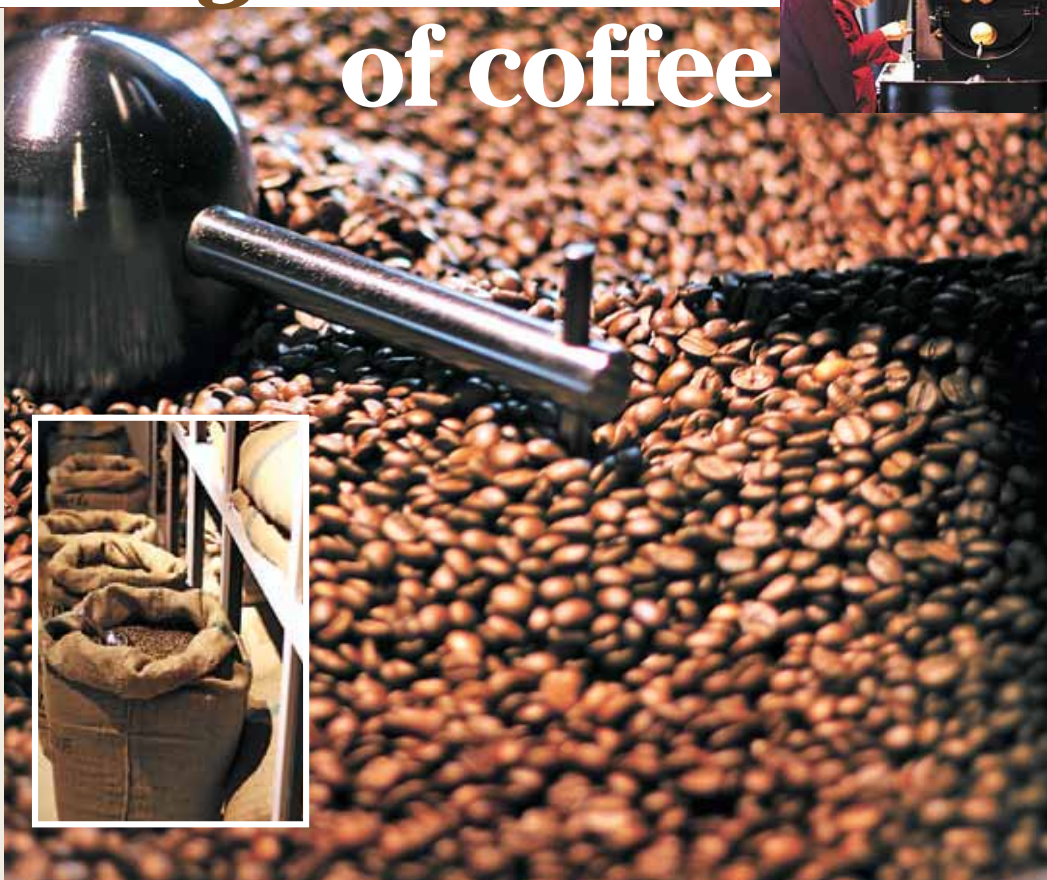
The shop's Holiday series are beans by Cafe de Colombia, a company that produces only 3,000 bags a year. Zhao's favorite is Kenyan coffee, which has a fruity flavor. As the only Chinese member of the Special Coffee Association of Europe, Host Cafe ensures the quality of its products.

Host Cafe

Where: Beside the intersection of Lize Lu and Beijingzhan Nan Lu, Fengtai District

Open: 1-11 pm

Web: hostcafe.com



Bags of imported coffee beans are stocked in Host Cafe's inner room.

Photos by Song Nannan

Hubei meals and snacks at Workers' Stadium

By Annie Wei

Lao Hankou, a mid-priced source of authentic Hubei meals and snacks, proves once again why the Workers' Stadium neighborhood is one of the most popular dining areas in town.

Hubei cooking uses a generous amount of fish, duck, radish and lotus root – meat and produce that abound in and around the province's many rivers and lakes. Bordering Hunan, the home of China's spiciest dishes, Hubei also knows a thing or two about setting your taste buds on fire.

A classic Hubei dish is reganmian (8 yuan), hot dry noodles with diced radish and sesame sauce. Hubei natives usually eat theirs with additional spices and seasonings, like chopped garlic, vinegar, white pepper, preserved mustard tubers, ginger, scallions and chilies.

Another local staple is wuchang fish with fried scallion (38 yuan per 500 grams). The fish, which can only be found in Wuhan, is known for its thick yet tender flesh; its abdomen does not contain any black film. In Wuhan, the fish is usually served freshly caught from the river and is one thing tourists



Steamed glutinous rice with pumpkin, vegetables and radish, 28 yuan (right) and hot dry noodle, 8 yuan (left)

Photos by Huang Xiao



never forget from their culinary experience in the city.

Something diners should not miss is mianyang sanzhen (28 yuan), steamed glutinous rice with pumpkin, green vegetables and fresh radish.

The dish, which comes from the lakeside town of Mianyang, is associated with two stories. One is a folk story: Chen Youliang, a peasant leader who lived during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368), organized an army in a revolt against the imperial government. His wife apparently invented the dish to give Chen's troops maximum nourishment.

The second says that one year, the residents of Mianyang had an abundance of fish and meat but little rice, so they ground the rice grains and steamed them with fish, shrimp, vegetables and lotus root. Since then, it has become an indelible part of the town's history.

Other dishes we recommend are fried turtle and chicken (168 yuan per 500 grams), steamed fish with two peppers (32 yuan per 500 grams), stewed pork spine (68 yuan), Hubei-style stewed chicken (68 yuan) and a cold dish of beef tripe (28 yuan).

Drop by for breakfast and try

doupi (20 yuan), fried crepes made of mung bean and rice flour stuffed with glutinous rice, minced meat, bamboo shoots and shrimp or mushroom.

Last but not the least are popular Hubei snacks like spicy duck wings (8 yuan), neck (8 yuan) and intestines (18 yuan).

Lao Hankou's wait staff are attentive and friendly, and the restaurant serves free diced radish.

Lao Hankou
Where: Station 5, Workers' Stadium, Gongti Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6553 1998

Operas made in China

By He Jianwei

This year, Puccini will no longer dominate the National Center for the Performing Arts' (NCPA) Opera Festival.

From April 15 to July 3, the NCPA will present 12 operas, including five works by Chinese artists on top of productions by Russia's Bolshoi Theater and Italy's Parma Royal Theater.

"Last year, I felt embarrassed when the president of the Paris National Opera Theater asked me how many operas we create each year," Jin Man, an opera performer and director of Peking University's Opera Research Institute, said at the unveiling of the Opera Festival on March 3.

The number of opera followers in the country is dwindling, but local artists have insisted on creating new pieces that draw inspiration from Chinese literature since last year.

The festival's curtain-raiser this year is *Xi Shi*, the legendary love story of a renowned beauty in the Spring and Autumn

Period (770-476 BC). It was NCPA's first original production, which debuted in 2008.

Although the opera follows the structure of its Western counterparts, it remains faithful to its roots by incorporating Chinese elements. For instance, the choreographer weaves in a sequence of *xiangji*, or sounding clogs – the earliest form of tap dance in China.

Modern literature is also a source of inspiration to native artists.

Song of Youth, an influential novel written in 1958 and which has since been translated into 20 languages, talks about the life of young people during the Sino-Japanese wars of the 1930s. Jin Man and her colleagues created an opera based on it last year.

"The story, which explores the relationship among youth, country and society, invites the current generation of young people to ponder their relationship with the country," Jin says.

Some domestic works are more experimental. *Sun Snow*, the last in the festival lineup, incorporates folk, pop and ethnic music into opera.

Schedule of selected performances

Carmen

When: May 13-17, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan

Song of Youth

When: June 10-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan

Sun Snow

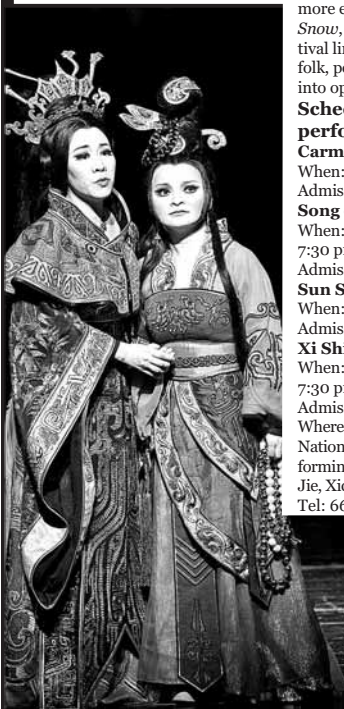
When: July 1-3, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan

Xi Shi

When: April 15-19, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-500 yuan

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

Tel: 6655 0000



Friday, March 26

Exhibition

Fashion Meets Jewelry

Where: 3+3 Art Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 7, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6437 3432



William Wegman

Where: Chang Art Beijing, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 25, except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6601 3204

Movie

Fine Pena Mai: Paradiso Perduto (No End of Punishment: Paradise Lost, 2008)

Where: Italian Cultural

Institute, 2 Dong Er Jie, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6532 2187

Le Genou de Claire (Claire's Knee, 1970) and

Eternal Summer (2006)

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 6:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan for two movies

Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Pierre Brahms Trio

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodakou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6401 4611

The Mushrooms' Beijing

Debut

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

Saturday, March 27

Exhibition

Two Are Better Than One

– Wang Shugang Solo Exhibition

Where: Alexander Ochs Galleries Beijing, 255 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 11, daily except Sunday and Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 13520205333

Windows on the Hutong

– Varvara Shavrova Solo Exhibition

Where: Gallery 49, Courtyard 4 (behind Pacific Century Place Department Store), Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 5, daily, 11 am – 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6501 1949

Movie

Growing Up (1983)

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6270 1928

Knitting (2008)

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

Duhuo – Folk Rock

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door

Tel: 5900 0969

Lidong Band Ballads Night

Where: Jiangjinju Bar, 2 Zhongku Hutong (few doors south of The Drum and Bell towers), Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 8605 0124

Sunday, March 28

Movie

Le Beau Mariage (A Good Marriage, 1994)

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Mazany Filip (Smart Philip, 2003)

Where: French Cultural Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6553 2627

Nightlife

19 Mirrors – Japanese Old-school Punk

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711

Ballads Night – Zhu Guangyu, Feng Yan and Jingangzhuzi

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan advance purchase, 40 yuan at the door

Tel: 5900 0969

Exhibition

Gone With the Wind – H. H. Lim Solo Exhibition

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 11, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, free for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Another Landscape

Photo Exhibition

Where: Inter Art Center, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 6, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9029



Upcoming

Concert

Love in Jazz – Mr. Miss Band

Where: Nine Theater, Chaoyang Culture Center, 17 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: April 3, 2:30 pm

Admission: 50 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 8599 1188, 8599 6011

Stage in April

Concert

Francesco Piemontesi Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: April 4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 90-380 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

David Braid Jazz Piano

Recital

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: April 10, 7 pm

Admission: 100-280 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Dance

Pharaoh's Daughter – Bolshoi Theater China Tour

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 30 – May 2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

21 Carat

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 13-18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-680 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

TNT's Macbeth

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: April 23-25, 7 pm

Admission: 100-200 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Design for Living

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 29 – May 3, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-880 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Musical

I Have a Date With Spring

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 7-11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-580 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Opera

Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: April 24-27, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Child's size no barrier to achievement

By Han Mamman

He Pingping, who stood 74.6 centimeters, died in Rome last week as the world's shortest man.

His passing is a chance to raise awareness about people with dwarfism.

Many people around the world are, like He, born with the condition. Doctors warn that there has been a surge in the number of children born with dwarfism because of congenital problems and unhealthy lifestyles.

Dwarfism

Dwarfism is defined as an abnormally short stature resulting from a medical condition. It is occasionally defined as an adult height shorter than 147 centimeters, although this definition is problematic because the condition is not short stature alone.

It can be caused by over 200 distinct medical conditions, and as such, the symptoms and characteristics of dwarfs vary greatly.

Dwarf expert Luo Feihong from Children's Hospital of Fudan University in Shanghai said there is an increasing number of children born with dwarfism due to congenital problems or unhealthy lifestyles.

There are 8 million people with dwarfism in China, he said. Many suffer from inferiority complexes because of the negative social perception of their condition. They are a target of childhood ridicule and discrimination in the workplace.

Types of dwarfism

The physical appearance of dwarfs varies dramatically depending on the cause or causes of their condition.

Achondroplasia is the most common kind of dwarfism, which causes 80 percent of all cases: 1 of every 25,000 to 40,000 births. People with achondroplasia have a problem converting cartilage to bone while growing, especially in the long bones of the arms and legs.

People with achondroplasia usually have a normal-size torso but noticeably shorter arms and legs. Their heads are usually larger with a prominent forehead. Their fingers are short, and the ring finger and middle fingers may separate giving a three-pronged appearance. Adults with achondroplasia often develop sway of the lower back and bowed legs.

Diastrophic dysplasia, another condition, occurs in about 1 of every 100,000 births. People with diastrophic dysplasia have an abnormal cartilage structure that prevents bones from forming properly.

People with diastrophic dwarfism have short calves and forearms and a progressive curvature of the spine. They can have an inward- or downward-pointing foot or club foot. Most diastrophic dwarfs have joint deformities that limit movement.

That, coupled with severe scoliosis, can make it difficult for people with diastrophic dwarfism to walk, especially when they age. Some people with this condition use crutches or a wheelchair.

Spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia is another rare genetic disorder that affects bone growth and can result in dwarfism. It interferes with the normal development of bone and connective tissue.

People with this condition have a very short torso, neck and limbs but average-sized hands and feet. They also often have scoliosis that worsens throughout childhood, eventually causing respiratory problems.



CFP Photo

Genetic mutation

Luo said 80 percent of people born with dwarfism have average-sized parents. It is not known why the genetic mutation occurs or how the mutation translates into the characteristics of dwarfism.

However, severe insomnia, bad nutrition and overuse of medicine may put children at risk of endocrine dysfunction and abnormal skeletal development, both of which can lead to dwarfism, Luo said.

Twenty percent of people born with dwarfism inherit the faulty gene from an affected parent. If a parent has dwarfism, his or her child has a 50 percent chance of inheriting the condition.

When both parents have dwarfism, the child has a one in four chance of inheriting the condition from both parents causing "double dominant" or homozygous dwarfism. Few children with this condition can thrive after their first year.

Signs your baby may be a dwarf

Parents of small babies often fret over early signs and symptoms of dwarfism. There are a few key indicators.

Luo said excess skin around the neck of a newborn combined with puffy hands and feet during infancy may be the earliest symptoms of dwarfism.

Club foot can also be an early sign of disproportionate dwarfism. As part of a newborn's first checkup, doctors will check for these and other disorders that may hinder proper growth.

"Parents should alert pediatricians about these health questions. Dwarfs are prone to heart problems and brain aneurysms," Luo said.

Treatment options

Although dwarfism is incurable, there are many treatments to help ease its symptoms. Dwarfs often have operations throughout life to prevent paralysis, correct spinal posture and reduce pressure on the brain.

They also have the option of undergoing a limb-lengthening operation. This operation consists of breaking long bones and then resetting them further apart with metal braces, and then allowing the bones to knit together. The procedure is extremely painful and it can have harmful side effects over time.

Dwarves also have the option of using human growth hormone injections. These injections only increase the speed of growth during childhood and do not change the overall height of the adult. There are also many harmful side effects.

Luo said dwarfism doesn't affect a child's cognitive abilities; there are only a few dwarfism-related conditions that would affect a child's ability to mature into adulthood and care for himself, albeit with physical challenges and adaptations.

Confidence and respect

Most children with dwarfism can lead normal lives. It is important to help your child build a sense of independence and self-esteem early in life:

1. Treat your child according to his or her age, not size. If you expect a 6-year-old to clean up his or her room, don't make an exception simply because your child is small. Something as simple as a light switch extender can give a short-statured child a sense of independence at home.
2. Present your child's condition — both to your child and to others — as a difference rather than a hindrance. Your attitude and expectations can have a significant influence on your child's self-esteem.
3. Learn to deal with people's reactions, whether it's simple curiosity or outright ignorance, without anger. Address questions or comments as directly as possible, then take a moment to point out something special about your child.
4. If your child is teased at school, don't overlook it. Talk to teachers and administrators to make sure your child is getting the support he or she needs.
5. Encourage your child to find a hobby or activity to enjoy. If sports aren't going to be the child's forte, then consider music, art, computers, writing or photography.

Beautiful wings of spring

Top bird watching sites in and out of the city

By Zhang Dongya

After an unusually long and bitter-cold winter, spring has finally arrived. The season begins the return flight of migratory birds to the north, and bird-watching aficionados in town are already gearing up for their favorite time of year.

There are many good places for bird watching in Beijing – both downtown and in the suburbs – that provide chances to view rare species. *Beijing Today* spoke with local bird watchers about their favorite spots and tips on how to make the most of the experience.

According to the 2010 Checklist of Birds of China, in *China Bird Report*, there are more than 1,300 bird species in the country, and new ones are continually being discovered.

Statistics from the Beijing Bird-Watching Society (BBWS) shows that 424 species have been spotted in the capital as of 2009, accounting for a third of the national total.

Migratory birds return north between April and May, and fly south between October and November. Right now, most of the birds that can be seen in the capital are those considered “residents” and “winter migrants.”

The former are species endemic to Beijing, such as the snowy-browed nuthatch, white-browed Chinese warbler, black stork and Ibisbill. They can be sighted year round, but are still considered gems by local watchers because of their rarity.

The peak season for sighting migratory birds is the end of April. With temperatures rising fast, there should be no change in the schedule.

City parks for bird watching

Zhu Jiang, 47, a member of guanniao.com, the most popular network for Chinese bird watchers, says that bird watching can be as simple as visiting a public park.

Zhu got into the hobby four years ago and spends each weekend watch-

ing for birds at parks around town. He also goes bird watching in other provinces, such as Hebei, Jiangxi and Yunnan, as well as foreign countries.

He has photographed at least 300 species and considers his best achievement the ones of the Tengmalm's owl, taken in Gansu Province, and the Tibetan eared pheasant, sighted in Tibet. Zhu says the former is mainly found in Europe, with less than 10 discovered in China, while the latter is rarely seen by people as it lives at such high altitudes.

For bird watchers who do not want to leave the comforts of the city, Zhu recommends going to the Olympic Forest Park, one of central Beijing's newest spots for bird watching. Its lake Aohai, or Olympic Sea, usually has mallards, common teals, common mergansers, spotted doves, little grebes, daurian redstarts and yellow-throated buntings.

Beijing Botanical Garden draws forest birds and is the best place to spot Beijing's own snowy-browed nuthatch and white-browed Chinese warbler. The garden is host to some 30 species, including the red-billed blue magpie, marsh tit, long-tailed tit, goldcrest and grey-capped greenfinch. It also has various types of woodpeckers: the grey-capped woodpecker, great spotted woodpecker and grey-headed woodpecker.

Continued on page 21...



Zhu Jiang, a local bird watcher, spends weekends and holidays discovering new birds around the city.



Ruddy shelducks can be seen at Wild-duck Lake.



Shidu is best known for being home to the black stork.



A plumbeous water-redstart in Shidu



Spring is the perfect season for bird watching in northern China.

Photos by Zhu Jiang



Baihe Canyon is the place to find the rare Ibisbill.

Photos by Zhu Jiang

... continued from page 20

Another gathering place for forest birds is the Temple of Heaven, where visitors can see the hawfinch, yellow-billed grosbeak, light-vented bulbul, great tit, yellow-bellied tit and grey-capped greenfinch.

In spring, the Old Summer Palace becomes home to several migratory black swans. Make time to see these magnificent birds before they fly off. Other birds that live in the former imperial hideaway are the mandarin duck, willow tit, white wagtail, common kingfisher and common buzzard.

Baiwangshan Forest Park, located north of the Summer Palace, is well-known for its forest birds and raptors, such as hawks and buzzards. It used to be the forest park nearest the city center before the Olympic Forest Park was completed in 2008.

The park's Baiwang Mountain is an easy climb and visitors will be rewarded with sights of colorful birds like the red-billed blue magpie, dusky thrush, orange-flanked bush robin and vinous-throated parrotbill.

Destinations in the suburbs

Some of the all-time most popular bird-watching sites outside the city are Yeya Hu, or Wide-duck Lake, in Yanqing County and Shidu in Fangshan District. Baihe Canyon

and Houshanling Village in Miyun County are newer discoveries.

Wide-duck Lake boasts of as many as 40 species, especially wild ducks: the ruddy shelduck, spot-billed duck, smew and pintail. The lake is also famous for its water birds and raptors, such as the northern harrier, Eurasian sparrow hawk and common kestrel.

In the nearby forest can be found the crested lark, Eurasian skylark, little bunting, reed bunting and Tristram's bunting.

Shidu is best known for the black stork, a first-class nationally protected animal. A group of black storks live on the bank of Shidu's Juma River, which is a good vantage point to watch them.

Baihe Canyon is the place to find the Ibisbill, rarely seen in other areas, and the black stork. The canyon is also home to birds such as the crested kingfisher, grey heron, wren, wigeon, shoveller, common pochard, tufted duck, little owl and red-billed chough.

Recently, hikers on their way to Wuling Mountain in Miyun County discovered a small yet ideal spot for bird watching in neighboring Houshanling Village.

The Miyun Reservoir's north bank is an ideal place to see the whooper swan. It is also a base for birds like the Eurasian curlew, common snipe, Oriental plover and great cormorant.



China is a popular destination for foreign bird watchers.

CFP Photo



Mandarin duck



A goldcrest at Beijing Botanical Garden



White-browed Chinese warbler at Beijing Botanical Garden

Tips for bird watching:

1. A telescope and an illustrated handbook of birds are necessary tools. Since it is difficult to get close to most birds, bring binoculars with a magnification factor of seven to 10 to make your trip worthwhile.
2. Wear clothes that will allow you to blend into the color of your surroundings. Avoid white and bright colors like red, yellow and orange.
3. Do not speak loudly or cry out; do not point to the direction of the birds; and do not frighten the birds by throwing stones at them.

Dining



Easter Day Sunday brunch

Indulge in an incredible Easter Sunday Brunch. The traditional Easter Egg Hunt will be fun for kids of all ages.

Where: VIC, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 4

Cost: 338 yuan per person with free fresh juice, wine, imported beer and soft drinks; 438 yuan per person with free Perrier-Jouet rose Champagne

Tel: 8599 6666



Easter Brunch

Spend this Easter at Scene a Cafe, where a variety of egg-citing options for Easter Sunday Brunch await. Its scrumptious spread of Easter favorites and thrilling children's games and activities are guaranteed to make it a great trip for the whole family.

Where: Scene a Cafe, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 4

Cost: 488 yuan, 348 yuan, 199 yuan (15 percent service charge)

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 35



Vegetarian Cuisine

Whether you are a vegetarian or not, it is important to consider the health effects of what you eat. Li Jing Xuan Chinese Restaurant will feature a special vegetarian menu from March 15 to 31. Come and indulge guilt free on natural and healthy foods. Chinese master chef Au Ma Fai creates great-tasting and beautiful dishes: he is passionate about food being natural and beneficial to health and longevity. The chef recommends fungus wrapped in winter melon and vegetarian mock "arbecued pork."

Where: Regent Beijing Hotel, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 8522 1789



Yao Chi featured menu

Yao Chi's new menu retains ever-popular Cantonese classics like 66 dim sum items, 26 authentic Cantonese dishes and 16 new recipes served in six private dining rooms.

Where: Yao Chi, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 15699718760 (Look for Rosemary)



Saltimbocca

Try Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun's Italian cuisine this spring. Its Saltimbocca is made using fresh veal, parma ham and a dash of Marsala with added sage for an irresistible finish.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

Cost: 198 yuan per person (15 percent service charge)

Tel: 5993 8888

Tourism

Travel with your wedding dress

Thinking of a destination wedding or a honeymoon on some paradise island? What about a romantic escape on your anniversary? Come to the warm, turquoise-colored Indian Ocean and stroll its lush, sandy beaches. Enjoy fine foods at luxurious hotel beach resorts and a warm welcome by the local islanders.

Hotel



Sunworld Dynasty gets new director

Lily Li is the new director of sales and marketing at Sunworld Dynasty Hotel. She previously worked for the Beijing Tourism Bureau and started her hospitality career at the Hilton Beijing in 2001. She has worked for several leading international hotels including Hilton, Marriott and Regus Group, where she was recognized for achievements in sales and marketing.

Gloria Hotels' new project in Guizhou

The rapid development of second-and-third tier cities has created new management opportunities at Gloria Hotels and Resorts, which is expanding within these regions. The Fuan Gloria Grand Hotel Duyun Guizhou, its latest property, opens in 2012. Fuan Gloria Grand Hotel is a five-star deluxe hotel located by Jian Jiang Bay. It has 332 elegant guest rooms with a wide range of food and beverage outlets, comprehensive meeting rooms and top-notch entertainment facilities.

Aviation

New flights from Philippines

Philippine Airlines' acquisition of two brand-new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft has paved the way for resumption of service to two international destinations — Brisbane, Australia, and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia — later this month. Flights to Brisbane resumed on March 17 and Riyadh will start on March 28. The locations are the 25th and 26th international destinations in a gradually expanding network.

For the latest PAL special promotions, packages as well as booking requirements, visit philippineairlines.com or call (632) 8558888.

SIA signs MOU with Marina bay sands

Singapore Airlines and Marina Bay Sands signed a memorandum of understanding to promote the Integrated Resort as a destination for customers headed to Singapore. Marina Bay Sands joins the list of hotels available under SIA's Singapore Stopover Holidays program, bringing the number of partner hotels to 40. Singapore Stopover Holidays offers overseas customers special accommodation rates at Marina Bay Sands, complimentary airport-hotel transfers, as well as discounts on shopping, dining and select attractions in Singapore. Marina Bay Sands Premier Advantage members will earn KrisFlyer miles for each qualifying stay at Marina Bay Sands.

Events

Promotion at Sanlitun Village

The second session of the V*itamin Fashion Show opened at Sanlitun Village last weekend. With 40 retailers including Eldi, Pye, Frey Wille and Rolex, it shows off this season's must-haves.

All apparel and accessories from the show are available at the Village.

From March 19 to April 12, spend 1,500 yuan or more at the Village to enter a raffle. Prizes include a 1,000-yuan

Fizztastic Easter

Seek and you shall find. Ask and you shall receive this Easter at Penta. Enjoy gourmet dining and Easter Sunday activities. Hop, hop, hop with live bunnies to help you to seek out Easter treasures and explore Vasco's Easter Sunday Brunch.

Where: PENTA, Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8

cash coupon for The North Face, three-month complimentary subscription to *Harper's Bazaar*, free copy of *Harper's Bazaar* April issue and 100 yuan cash coupon for Sac & Co.

Each single purchase of 2,000 yuan or more is eligible for an OPI Experience Voucher valued at 80 yuan plus a blended essential oil kit from Pretty Valley valued at 138 yuan.

(By Zhang Dongya)

Wangfujing Dong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: April 4, noon – 3 pm

Cost: 368 yuan (15 percent surcharge); kids ages 6-12 half off; under 6 eat free

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8411

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

The good and bad of name dropping



CFP Photo

By Li Zhixin

Last Saturday night, I attended a fashion show at Lan Club to give moral support to my model friend Vivien Chen, who was making her debut on the catwalk that evening. I went with another good friend, Wen Jing, an editor at a fashion magazine.

Vivien performed like a pro and was on cloud nine after the show. We found seats and had ordered a round of drinks when we spotted Lily Sun, a fashion stylist.

Wen cannot stand Lily's self-absorption and meant to act like she didn't see the woman, but I had already waved to her.

Lily came over and the others had no choice but to politely invite her to join us. She complimented Chen's performance, then launched into a detailed account of her "fabulous" week.

"On Monday, I had lunch with Su Mang, the editor-in-chief of *Bazaar*, who wanted me to work with her on a photo shoot," Lily said breathlessly.

"Yesterday, I phoned Zhang Ziyi to comfort her because she's just crushed by all the negative press that's been coming

out. This weekend, I have a fitting with the super glamorous model Lu Yan ..."

The three of us were bored to death and made up an excuse about needing to leave to see another friend.

"What a name dropper!" Wen said when we entered the lift. She tends to use English expressions whenever she is in a foul mood.

"You mean she doesn't value her own reputation?" I said.

"No, a 'name dropper' is someone who makes it appear that famous people are his or her close friends; mentions a name here, another name there," she said. "You know, she once wrote as her MSN status message, 'I treasure my friendships with Zhang Yimou, Gong Li and Zhang Ziyi.' How pretentious!"

"But how do you know she doesn't know those celebrities?" Vivien said.

"Because she is a Spanish fighter," Wen said smugly.

"What? But isn't she a stylist?" Vivien said.

Wen laughed. "I made that one up. But seriously, she always makes me so angry, which reminded me of a Spanish

bull fighter."

Wen said that although no one likes a name dropper, it does have its uses in China. "For example, if you claim that you're a distant relative of Sun Yat-sen, you might be become a guest of honor at celebrity parties. While chatting with government officials, if you drop hints of knowing a national leader, your application to hold a local fashion event will easily get approved," she said.

Hmm, this trick can work for me too, I thought afterwards.

This Tuesday, I dropped in unannounced at the office of a sports official who for weeks had been evading my request for an interview. I knew he was good friends with Yuan Weimin, a famous volleyball coach, so I tried my new strategy.

"Sir, I just finished an interview with Yuan Weimin and he suggested I also speak to you. So I came by without an appointment. I hope you don't mind," I said.

He offered me a seat, gave me a cup of tea and would not stop talking for an hour.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Men's wears

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): This is a mistake we often encounter from writings by beginners. They tend to make "wear" in a plural form. As a matter of fact, "wear" is a collective noun. We have: a suit for everyday wear, children's wear, women's wear, etc. So, "men's wears" is not correct. The standard form should be: menswear, a combined word form. We have another example here: While luxury fever lasted, "dress to excess" might have been the mantra for menswear. If you wish to say the two words separately, it is "men's wear." Please take note of the placement of apostrophe "s": It is men's wear, not mens' wear. It is women's wear, not womens' wear; it is children's wear, not childrens' wear.

Native speaker Steven Sander (SS):

Since the professor already nailed this answer, I will use his note about "menswear" as a segue into a topic on word spacing. In English, compound words can be spelled open (mens' wear), hyphenated (mens'-wear) or closed (menswear). New compounds are generally spelled open. After the term has floated around for a while it picks up a hyphen. Eventually an ambitious dictionary author may elect to codify it as the closed spelling. Whether to spell words open or closed largely depends on what the writer's target audience is used to seeing: tech publications especially tend to hyphenate or close compounds which are too new for the dictionary. When in doubt, check Webster or competing publications.

2. Precision

ZS: Undoubtedly, "precision" is a noun, judged but from its appearance. We have: speak with precision, the precision of a machine and define a word with the utmost precision. However, it can also serve as an attributive, for instance, precision bombing, precision instruments; the alternative, "precise instruments," seems quite unprofessional. It can also be combined with a verb, meaning "precisely." The castle was precision bombed during World War II. The instrument is so precision made that it can record the difference in one-thousandths of a second. We also have an example here from an English newspaper: The Jil Sander collection opened with an hourglass coat so precision cut that it might have been chiseled out of wood.

SS: Precision as an adjective is restricted to industrial or military uses unlike its cousin "precise." It refers to something that has been precisely executed or built to high standards and with an exceptionally low tolerance for faults.

3. Beside the points

ZS: This is an English phrase. But the correct form should be "beside the point," meaning "having nothing to do with the subject, not appropriate, irrelevant." A similar phrase may be "off the point." There are many English phrases combined with the word "point" with some in singular, and some in plural, form: beginners have to be very careful. For instance, we have "to make a point (of)": He made a point of arriving on time. She made it a point to write home once a week. You will never say: "to make points of." There is also a phrase "to the point": His speech is brief and to the point, it is never "to the points."

SS: To add to the list of idioms, you can also "stretch a point" by making an exception and including what may seem tangential. "In point of" can serve the same purpose as "with reference to."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Cherish monkeys at the moment of entrainment

By Tiffany Tan

Do you know what entrainment means? Get ready; this is one big word.

In chemistry, it means to carry along suspended particles, drops of liquid, bubbles and the like, in a liquid or gas current. In civil engineering: to incorporate air bubbles into concrete to increase its resistance to frost. In transport: to board or put aboard a train. In zoology: to adjust an organism's internal rhythm so that it synchronizes with an external cycle, such as light and darkness. In every-day speak: to pull or draw along after itself.



Unfortunately, Mr. Webster does not bring us any closer to understanding the sign in what is clearly an animal

park. Could entrainment be a misspelling of "training"?

No, the sign has nothing to do with training or any of the five meanings of entrainment we have above, says my trusted Chinglish consultant. The first line in fact says, Watch the monkeys, enjoy the monkeys, love the monkeys.

Hmm ... it appears entrainment is a misspelling of "entertainment": Enjoy the monkeys' antics – entertainment – and do not throw stones at them or poke them with sticks. (It helps to know that Chinese expressions are often redundant.)



Brothers

(2009)

Movie of the week

Brothers is something we have seen before – if not in its original 2004 incarnation from Denmark, then in *The Deer Hunter*. It surprises with the vulnerability, subtlety and ferocity of its cast.

The movie stars Tobey Maguire, Jake Gyllenhaal and Natalie Portman – top-notch actors and actresses. They give their characters enough depth, passion and fear and enough desires and ghosts to make them real. Director Jim Sheridan also deserves to be commended for giving the actors the space to transform their roles into real people.

Family life is fragile, and the equal doses of love and self-torment are what makes this film work.

Synopsis

Captain Sam Cahill is a Marine who receives orders to ship out for yet another tour of duty in Afghanistan. But before he leaves his supportive wife Grace and his two young daughters, Sam picks up his black sheep brother Tommy, who just finished a prison stretch for robbing a bank.

While overseas, Sam's aircraft is shot down and he's assumed dead.

Back home, Tommy gets his act together to be an anchor for Grace and the girls, and the two grow emotionally – though not physically – close. As the family finally begins to make peace with their grief, soldiers rescue Sam and he returns home. Sam's experiences overseas leave him unable to adjust to civilian life, and soon his fear and paranoia manifest themselves as jealousy of his brother's relationship with his wife.



Scene 1

(The Cahill family hears Sam was killed in action. Tommy talks with their father Hank after a quarrel.)

Tommy (T): Good morning.

Hank (H): Pancakes, huh.

T: Yeah, actually there's one on the floor if you want it.

H: What are they doing here?

T: They're making pancakes.

H: Look um ... I was a little stupid the other day ...

T: Oh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

H: It was OK to drive ...

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know ... I know Sam is always smarter than me.

H: Not really that much smarter ... He was a damn good athlete. Remember that game with Easton? Truly delightful. You have some talent too, you know, I mean ... He doesn't quit all the time. That was different between you and him. Sam had **no quitting in him** (1).

(Hank cannot help crying.)

T: I'd cut my throat to bring him back, Dad.

H: I don't know ... how they can live with this kitchen the way it is.

Vocabulary

- 1. no quitting in him:** lacks the ability to give up
- 2. bounce a check:** to write a check for money you don't have
- 3. take someone for:** to assume someone is
- 4. square:** the antithesis of cool
- 5. stuck up:** conceited; full of oneself

(By Wang Yu)

Scene 2

(Tommy talks with Grace at night.)

T: I talked to her for over an hour. She said to me that she hadn't slept right in over three years. She kept having these nightmares that I'd come back and shoot her.

And then ... I told her that it was alright, that I wasn't gonna hurt her. She just started to cry. Right there in the bank, she started to cry. And ... Then she thanked me. She ... she said that she felt like ... she's safe. Like she could breathe again.

Then she asked if I wanted to open up a bank account.

Grace (G): No.

T: Swear to God.

G: What did you do?

T: I opened an account.

G: I'm proud of you.

T: I can't wait to start **bouncing checks** (2).

(Tommy gets a cigarette.)

T: When I was like 17 or 18, I used to listen to this song, like over and over again.

G: Me too!

T: Really?

G: Why is that so surprising?

T: I don't know ... I just ... I **took you more for** (3) like an N'Sync fan.

G: F---k you. Give me that.

(Grace asks for the cigarette.)

G: You think I'm such a **square** (4).

T: I'm starting to reassess Snoop Dogg.

G: Just 'cause I'm the cheerleader doesn't ...

T: Yeah, and you dated a football player.

G: Am I such a cliché?

T: You were kind of a pain in the ass, you gotta admit that.

G: No, I wasn't. Guys always say that girls were **stuck up** (5) if they wouldn't talk to them. I just didn't like you. You're always drunk and fighting ...

(They kiss.)



Scene 3

(Sam survives the enemy and returns home.)

Sam (S): Grace is something, huh. Did you f---k her?

T: What, are you kidding?

S: I'd understand. You thought I was dead.

T: Stop it.

S: Tommy. I could forgive you.

T: What's going on with your head? What's making you think that?

S: You guys just look like two teenagers in love out there.

T: Really.

S: I mean, you know ... You can't deny that. You can tell me. You gotta tell me, you understand? I know you slept at my house.

T: Sam ... Sam ...

S: Don't bullshit me.

